



Connecticut **Business & Industry Association**
Testimony Of

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My name is Lauren W. Kaufman. I am the vice president of the Education Foundation for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (hereinafter "CBIA"). CBIA represents approximately 10,000 member companies in virtually every industry. They range from large, global corporations to small, family owned businesses. The vast majority of our member companies have fewer than 50 employees.

CBIA and its members have long recognized that having a skilled workforce is a top priority for Connecticut businesses and appreciates the Education Committee's commitment to ensuring our workforce has the necessary tools to be successful. For this reason CBIA supports:

HB 5867, An Act Concerning Vocational-Technical Schools.

This measure would require that the technical school system employs development officers to promote the schools to middle school students. It is important that all students and their families understand the education and training opportunities offered in the technical school system to prepare students in the skilled trades, a critical sector of Connecticut's economy. CBIA also strongly supports special attention being paid to manufacturers across the state who are concerned about a shortage of skilled workers to fill new positions and replace retiring employees. Similarly, the energy industry is also facing a skilled labor shortage as well as over half the workforce reaching retirement age in the next decade. This is why increasing public awareness of the technical school system is so important and increasing the state's investment in upgrading school facilities and providing resources for equipment and supplies is so necessary.

Furthermore, we need to ensure that we are not just increasing the number of graduates from vocational-technical schools but that they are meeting the current technical school requirements, such as the NIMS (National Institute of Metalworking Skills)-certification. By having NIMS standards in place, our workforce will be able to match the skills required on a national level and by Connecticut Manufacturers throughout the state.

The business community strongly supports including these actions as part of the measure to strengthen our technical school system. By investing more heavily to expand the capacity of our technical high schools and community colleges we can recruit and train more students in manufacturing technology

programs. CBIA is encouraged by the legislative actions taken thus far and supports expanding those measures to promote and invest in Connecticut's Technical Schools.

SB 647, An Act Concerning Charter Schools.

CBIA supports SB 647 because it would raise the per pupil payment for charter schools to the state-wide average and streamline the annual funding process and promote a more transparent process. Evidence of high-performing schools in Connecticut and throughout the nation clearly demonstrates that students from all socioeconomic backgrounds need to be challenged and engaged learners, when this is accomplished, they also can attain high academic standards. By supporting our charter schools we can make serious changes to close the ever increasing achievement gap that our state is facing and ensure that all Connecticut kids have access to great schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.