



***TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE COMMERCE COMMITTEE***  
***March 5, 2009***

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**HB 6369 AN ACT CONCERNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION**

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Good morning Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, and members of the Commerce Committee. My name is Bonnie Del Conte and I am the President and CEO of CONNSTEP, the Connecticut State Extension Program. I am here to today to testify in SUPPORT of HB 6369 AN ACT CONCERNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION.

With the support from the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), CONNSTEP's mission is to assist Connecticut manufacturer's and companies in applying business strategies and techniques to make them more competitive. Our strong concentration is in the area of LEAN services, which improves productivity by maximizing value added activities and eliminating waste. This allows organizations to be more efficient and customer focused, better able to face the competitive challenges now and in the future. Local government administrators are all too familiar with the phrase "more with less". And while our budgets here and around the nation are being cut, citizens demand a continuing high level of service without tax increases. One effective approach to bridge the gap is to become a Lean organization. Lean activities have proven extremely effective in both state and local governments.

Although there are many steps and challenges to implement the process, progressive managers are adopting the lean concept, and making significant improvements in governmental operations, by clearly identifying activities that should be eliminated, simplified or enhanced.

In working with DECD, I have witnessed the change in culture which is in pursuit of team based initiatives and a process for standardization. Connecticut Business Connections, which assembled a team of business advisors, conducts a series of information session throughout the state. By bringing together all the resources from our network of economic development service providers in this fashion, it has made it easier for companies and entrepreneurs to access the tools they need to succeed, and to get any questions they may have answered right there on the spot.

In the current raised bill, DECD's commissioner would continue on this path by centralizing and streamlining the way in which individuals and businesses research, inquire, and apply for economic development assistance. By establishing a web portal for information of all of the state's economic development programs, along with a single point-of-contact for any entity seeking assistance and a common application form and process, this "combining" approach would begin to eliminate the non-value added activities or "steps". Again, from a lean perspective, this would increase speed to market by addressing the needs of the customer in a timely fashion.

I believe that the reorganization of the agencies and programs so noted in this bill will be a start to providing the state with a plan for a better business system of organization and management of operations.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.