



College of Arts and Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

Department of Politics
and Government

February 18, 2009

Honorable Members of the Commerce Committee:

It is a privilege to testify before you, just as it was twelve years ago when a strong bipartisan consensus of the Connecticut State Government was thwarted by mishandling and weak follow-up by the Commission of Economic Opportunity and Development.

I bring to the Committee graduate degrees in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of Pennsylvania; forty years of teaching at the University of Hartford about development in the so-called Third World including a decade of participation in the prestigious Yale-Wesleyan seminar on Southern African Research Problems; and teaching, research, and/or conferencing in South Africa, Egypt, Ghana, and Nigeria. I was also a delegate to the United States Summit on Africa under the Clinton administration, from which a strong call went forth for increased trade and cultural/educational exchange with the nations of Africa.

It is abundantly clear that a progressive state like Connecticut, with long-established manufacturing and export-import credentials, is in a strong position to develop economic ties of mutual benefit with stable and growing economies in Sub-Sahara Africa. Yet our wonderful state lags woefully in taking advantage of such opportunities, which would not only benefit established enterprises within our borders, but might well, in the clear vision of the Africa Trade and Information Center, Inc., bring dilapidated segments of the state's great cities to life with new opportunities for work on such things as coffee processing in abandoned buildings. Heaven knows, in our current and foreseeable economic climate, that such opportunities are desperately needed.

I urge the Commerce Committee to report favorably on Raised Bill no. 880 and to promote it vigorously among your distinguished colleagues so that, at long last, the damage that was done a dozen years ago when the clear will of our State Government was not heeded, can be repaired and our citizens can benefit from political leadership that, again, sees the need and opportunity to move forward with this low-to-no cost proposition to study what has and has not been done, and what can and ought to be done to promote the economic well-being of our beloved state.

Sincerely,

Harald M. Sandström, PhD

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Coordinator, Political Economy Major

University of Hartford