

**Testimony of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce  
to the  
Education Committee  
March 9, 2009**

**Re: Testimony in Support of HB 6370, AAC a Middle College System**

Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleishmann, my name is Louise DiCocco-Beauton and I am Director of Governmental Affairs for the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce. I am here to testify today on behalf of Tony Rescigno, President of the Greater New Haven Chamber in support of **HB 6370, AAC a Middle College System.**

HB 6370 proposes to merge the Technical High Schools and Community Colleges together with guidance from the state's Office of Workforce Competitiveness. The Middle College system would expand the traditional technical high school experience to include the possibility of college training and the earning of college credits while in high school and present students with an increased number and a variety of career paths.

The concept offers programs to bridge the gap between high school and higher education and also allows the business community to become involved in identifying the skills needed by graduating students so that they can compete in the marketplace.

Coordinating the education and workforce missions of these two education systems will allow us to address these issue the Chamber hears from its members regularly- lack of certain skilled workers. The Metro-Chambers of Commerce, a coalition of the eight largest chambers in the state have voted to support the Middle College System proposal.

The Middle College proposal is worthy of further discussion and may just be a new approach to education that improves graduation rates and career prospects for students while at the same time meeting Connecticut's workforce needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.