

**FINANCE, REVENUE and BONDING COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING FEBRUARY 23, 2009**

TESTIMONY for SB-837

Senator Daily, Representative Staples and members of the Finance Committee, my name is Cameron Champlin and I represent the United Association of Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Local Union 777. We are opposed to the substitute language in SB-837 for Section 232 of the general statutes for the following reasons.

In 2003 the apprenticeship division of the labor department was reduced from fourteen positions to one position. At that time the construction trades realized that something had to be done in order to keep the apprenticeship programs at the same level of service as in the past. Both the union and non union sectors came together and agreed on a registration fee of twenty-five dollars to be assessed to each apprentice on an annual basis. Also a separate fee of thirty dollars was assessed to the sponsor of a program for each apprentice participating in that program on an annual basis. As you can see the structure for these fees were from the private sector to help the State of Connecticut to continue a very important function for our workforce.

When all of this was instituted the fees were directed into a non lapsing account within the Labor Department and dedicated to the Apprenticeship Division. To terminate this procedure would be counter productive to the quality of our apprenticeship programs. If these fees are doubled it could create a hardship for some of the apprentices coming into the programs, especially the youths from the inner city, who come through community based organizations that are helping to guide these individuals to secure a career that will pay them good wages and benefits throughout their years of employment ensuring them of a better quality of life.

If the fees are directed into the general fund we know that the programs that were to be financially assisted to keep their level of service adequate will not receive the amount of funding that our industry feels they need. Please keep in mind, as I stated previously, these fees were imposed at the request of both Union and Non Union Contractors and the Unions themselves in order to preserve our apprenticeship programs at the highest level of competency. Remember one of Connecticut's greatest assets is its well trained productive workforce.

We all realize that we are in a serious financial situation at this time but we have to look forward to our economy rebounding. When this happens, and it will, we have to be ready to supply businesses with personnel that can perform whatever task is asked of them. Remember one of Connecticut's greatest assets is its well trained , productive workforce.

Thank you for considering my testimony. If there are any question please contact me by Cell (860) 287-0020, Fax/Phone (860) 443-9485 or Email camc@att.net.