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February 24, 2009

General Law Committee

H.B. 6471 An Act Making Changes to the Liquor Control Act

I am Karen Rotella, Program Coordinator for the Hospitality Management Department at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury. I appreciate the opportunity to support House Bill 6471 **AN ACT MAKING CHANGES TO THE LIQUOR CONTROL ACT.**

Naugatuck Valley Community College is unique within the community college system because it offers students the opportunity to enroll in Wine & Viticulture courses. The principles of enology (wine making), viticulture (grape growing), vineyard management and food and wine pairings are taught as part of the hospitality curriculum. This unique field of study gives our students the competitive edge when seeking employment in one of the nation's fastest growing industries. We currently have 100 students enrolled in the program, and we are growing at a rate of 12% per year.

Under the current regulations, wine manufactured by students may not be served to guests at our on-campus functions, such as elegant dinners and fund raisers for scholarships. The passage of H.B. 6471 will allow our students to practice the art of wine service in settings that prepare them for future employment. Waterbury region currently has the highest unemployment rate in the State. Please help us provide our students with an educational opportunity that gives sets them apart from the rest of the field.

Thank you for your support.