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TESTIMONY OF

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Before

The General Law Committee

**Supporting:**

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

Hospitality and Tourism are important segments of the service industry in Connecticut. Wine is becoming a larger segment in both. We now have approximately 25 wineries in the state and I believe that number will continue to rise in the future. We currently need a trained labor force to accommodate this growth. The role of the Community College is to prepare students to either enter the workforce upon graduation {whether it is a couple of training classes, a certificate or degree(s)} or to prepare them to transfer where they can continue their studies towards a higher degree. The end goal is for these students to obtain a job.

The model I would like to reference is that of the Finger Lakes in New York State. Today, they have more than 100 wineries producing 40 million bottles per year; the region is among the largest wine producers in the nation<sup>1</sup>. It is in part through the support of the region's educational system that the industry has grown to where is today. Workers have been trained to tend to the vines, pour in the tasting rooms, and ferment and bottle in the cellars of these wineries. Restaurants have added the wines to their menus and customers now have a choice of consuming a quality made "local" wine.

I believe that the best education is obtained through a "Hands-On" approach. Our students will become better educated and be able to excel at their career choice in the Hospitality industry with your support of the **Proposed H.B. 6471** An Act Making Changes to the Liquor Control Act.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.

Peter J. Cisek

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fingerlakes.org/wine.htm>