

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING  
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2009 – 1:30 P.M. LOB ROOM 2B**

**HB 6370 – An Act Concerning a Middle College System**

**Testimony Presented by: Joyce A. Wojtas, Representing the Mechanical Contractors Association of Connecticut (MCAC) and the UA Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 777**

**Position: Opposed to Sections 6, 7, 8 and 9 – Apprenticeship Training Program transfer to the Middle College System**

The MCAC and Local 777 oppose the elimination of the apprenticeship training program from under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labor and the subsequent transfer to the proposed Middle College System. This program is probably one of the best in the country and provides the administration for the training and job opportunities for many people who want to work in the construction and manufacturing trades. The program is run efficiently by some of the most dedicated individuals in public service and for all practical purposes, it is working. As the old saying goes, "IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT!!!!!!!!!"

Thousands of people have successfully completed training and are employed in the construction today because of the Apprenticeship Program Manager and his staff, who work closely with the construction trades and the contractors who participate in the training, to keep this program on course.

The apprentice and sponsor fees are currently credited to the DOL for the administration of the program. This bill sends those fees to the General Fund where they will just become another "cash cow". The current law concerning fees was a statutory commitment to young people interested in becoming apprentices and to the sponsors, willing to pay for their training. It was an agreement by both union and non-union employers and the unionized trades. Without appropriate administration by the Department of Labor and having to compete for funding in this so-called "Middle College System", this program will experience serious problems to the detriment of all involved.

The apprenticeship training program does not belong in a Middle College System. It will undoubtedly end up as a low priority in the educational arena, which currently favors "the college education route" for all our young people, even if they cannot find good paying jobs when they graduate from college.

Apprenticeship training for the construction trades gives our young people an opportunity for employment with a decent wage along with health and pension benefits. Let this program, which costs the state practically zero, continue to provide assistance to the young people interested in entering the construction trades as we prepare for infrastructure programs to revitalize our economy. A CHANGE TO A MIDDLE COLLEGE SYSTEM IS NOT THE ANSWER.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

here is a bill that transfers this entire program to a proposed "Middle College", which would also be a disaster and is opposed by MCAC and Local 777. Leave the program in the DOL and if more dollars are required, then raise the fees accordingly to pay for it. Our kids deserve it!!!