

CBIA

Connecticut Business & Industry Association

**Testimony of Jesmin Basanti
Staff Attorney, CBIA
Before the Committee on Education
Hartford, Connecticut
March 8, 2010**

S.B. 379 An Act Concerning Vocational-Technical Schools

Good Afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and all other members of the Committee. My name is Jesmin Basanti, Staff Attorney in Education Matters for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (hereinafter "CBIA"). CBIA represents approximately 10,000 member companies in virtually every industry. They range from large, global corporations to small, family owned businesses. The vast majority of our member companies have fewer than 50 employees.

CBIA and its members have long recognized that having a skilled workforce is a top priority for Connecticut businesses and appreciates the Education Committee's commitment to ensuring our workforce has the necessary tools to be successful. For this reason CBIA supports the intent of SB 379.

It is important that all students and their families understand the education and training opportunities offered in the technical school system to prepare students in the skilled trades, a critical sector of Connecticut's economy. This is why increasing public awareness of the technical school system is so important and reemphasizing the state's investment in school facilities and providing resources for equipment and supplies is so necessary.

Furthermore, we need to ensure that we are not just increasing the number of graduates from vocational-technical schools but that they are meeting the current technical school requirements, such as the NIMS (National Institute of Metalworking Skills)-certification. By having NIMS standards in place, our workforce will be able to match the skills required on a national level and by Connecticut Manufacturers throughout the state.

The business community strongly supports including these actions as part of the measure to strengthen our technical school system. By reallocating funds to ensure our technical school system is operating at its full potential, we can recruit and train more students in manufacturing technology programs. CBIA is encouraged by the legislative actions taken thus far and supports expanding those measures to promote and invest in Connecticut's Technical Schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.