



State of Connecticut
Department of Higher Education

Testimony by
Michael P. Meotti
Commissioner of Higher Education
before the
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
10:30 a.m. – LOB Room 2C
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Good morning Senator Handley, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. For the record, I am Michael P. Meotti, Commissioner of Higher Education.

House Bill 5028 An Act Concerning Developing the Creative Economy recognizes the strategic importance of creative activity in shaping economic growth and quality of life in a community, region, state and nation. I would use Richard Florida's broad definition of "creative activity" to include scientists, engineers, managers, innovators, and people in research and development, as well as artists, writers, and musicians. He calculates that this group represents 30 percent of the U.S. workforce, with 50 percent of wages earned and controlling nearly 70 percent of discretionary spending in the US. In all likelihood, comparable numbers for Connecticut would be higher.

A very incomplete and quick scan of the Connecticut landscape shows a wide range of creative institutions including the Hartt School of Music, United Technologies Research Center, Yale School of Architecture, Blue Sky Studios, Goodspeed Opera House, Priceline, UCONN School of Medicine and more. When creativity is translated into economic activity, it can create jobs, increase family incomes and expand local economies at a pace far above the growth that comes from less knowledge-intensive activity.

Higher education and the creative economy are completely intertwined. Metropolitan regions that rank high on creative economic activity have high concentrations of colleges and universities. Most jobs in the creative economy require post-secondary degrees.

The Department of Higher Education is happy to be supportive should you move ahead with this idea. While we can help connect the higher education community to this initiative and provide some administrative assistance to such a study, I do need to caution you that DHE does not have the technical expertise to conduct the wide range of sophisticated economic analysis that would be required.

Thank you for your consideration.