



Connecticut Business & Industry Association

**Testimony of Jesmin K. Basanti  
Staff Attorney, CBIA  
Before the Committee on Energy and Technology  
Hartford, Connecticut  
March 9, 2010**

**S.B. 417 An Act Concerning Call Centers and the Timely Repair of Public  
Utility Poles**

Good Afternoon Senator Fonfara and Representative Nardello and other members of the committee. My name is Jesmin Basanti and I am Staff Attorney for Economic Development matters at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (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 supports measures that aim to increase or retain jobs in Connecticut. However, **SB 417** has many unintended consequences, which could lead to further job losses. This bill is a protectionist measure that will reduce cost-effective competition, and trade. In essence, improving economic standing and potential job growth cannot be accomplished by adopting measures such as this; therefore, we **oppose SB 417**.

Specifically, **Section 3** has the unintended effect of penalizing Connecticut companies who have to do business outside of the state in order to stay competitive. Although aimed at only one industry, from a public policy stand point, this is a slippery slope with no end point.

This section sends the message that Connecticut does not want to operate in today's global economy. Rather than encouraging trade and growth, this section will discourage other states and countries from trading with Connecticut and/ or cause them to retaliate by refusing to do business with our state. This only makes it more difficult for Connecticut companies to compete in the global marketplace. If we close off trade routes, others will retaliate by doing the same to us.

Ensuring that our state laws recognize the economic importance of protecting the ability of Connecticut companies to compete, not only in the state,

but also in the national and the global marketplace is imperative. Currently, Connecticut is home to approximately 1,200 foreign companies and it exports approximately \$8 billion of Connecticut made products annually. If Connecticut chooses to adopt protectionist measures, it is likely that players in the global economy will choose not to continue to do business with or in Connecticut.

This is not a solution to the current economic climate in Connecticut. Businesses have to make daily decisions about how to keep their operations competitive and currently they are struggling to stay afloat and keep as many employees as possible. The state should be looking for ways to reduce costs, develop a skilled workforce and create dependable infrastructure to keep businesses in Connecticut not to punish them for being competitive.

Creating legislation that will keep companies in Connecticut should be priority one, not proposals aimed at pushing them further away. **SB 417** is a protectionist measure that will harm Connecticut's economic growth at a time when we need it most. Therefore, we urge you to **reject SB 417**.

Thank you for granting me the opportunity to testify today.