Connecticut Center for
Advanced Technology, Inc.

Testimony of

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Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc.

To

Appropriations Committee

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Regarding

Governor's Bill No. 1011
An Act Concerning a Reorganization of
Connecticut's System of Public Higher Education

The Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc. ("CCAT") offers this testimony regarding Governor's Bill No. 6127- An Act Concerning a Reorganization of Connecticut's System of Public Higher Education

The Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc. (CCAT) is a unique economic development organization that combines expertise in cutting-edge technology with specialized centers of excellence in manufacturing, education, training, energy and entrepreneurialism. Through collaboration with industry, academia, and government, we help companies innovate and compete in the global market to address 21st Century economic challenges by providing programs and services in three core areas – efficiencies, technologies and workforce development. CCAT's Manufacturing and Supply Chain Initiative (MSCI) works to help U.S.-based small and medium-sized manufacturers compete in a more complex, global supply chain. Programs spearheaded by MSCI comprise efforts to boost productivity, expand new business opportunities and improve both the quality and number of workers trained in advanced manufacturing techniques.

Industries depend on the skills of their employees to grow and compete. One of the strengths of the Connecticut Community College System (CCCS) is its connection to and collaboration with the workforce development system. CCCS has been extremely successful in pursuing competitive federal funds to support its capacity to train a workforce in advanced manufacturing, health, and alternative and sustainable energy industry sectors. Over the past four years, CCAT has directly collaborated with CCCS on two manufacturing grant initiatives – Advanced Manufacturing and SMART, Skilled Manufacturing and Related Technologies, and a project to support the growing green economy related to alternative and sustainable energy, SOAR, Sustainable Operations: Alternative and Renewable Energy Initiative.

The CCCS has partnered with CCAT to serve as a liaison to industry for these grants. CCAT's role is to ensure that industry, particularly manufacturers, have a voice in the development of innovative and comprehensive programs that meet their needs. Whether directly, or through CCAT, employers are involved in the identification of training needs and the creation or improvement of curriculum that is required for a skilled competitive workforce. CCAT also recruits employers to actively engage in

training students through experiential opportunities including job shadowing, plant tours, and internships.

The CCCS and CCAT also look for ways to leverage our resources and strengths. To celebrate National Entrepreneurship Week in Connecticut, CCAT, in partnership with the CCCS, holds events specifically designed to increase knowledge about entrepreneurship and its role in generating economic growth. To spread this knowledge, CCAT assembles panels of entrepreneurs and small business owners. Each panel is assigned to one of four community college campuses (Gateway Community College, Housatonic Community College, Manchester Community College and Three Rivers Community College) where panelists tell personal success stories to inspire students to explore the possibility of starting and running their own businesses. In addition to hundreds of college students, attendees also include the general public and local Chambers of Commerce. We are pleased to partner with the Connecticut Community College system to spotlight the importance of entrepreneurialism in our society.

In October, 2010, President Barack Obama called for community colleges to produce an additional 5 million graduates by 2020 as he convened a White House summit to spotlight the two-year institutions he said are more important than ever to the country's competitiveness. Calling them the "unsung heroes of America's education system," Obama said community colleges "may not get the credit they deserve, they may not get the same resources as other schools, but they provide a gateway to millions of Americans to good jobs and a better life."

Unfortunately, this challenge will be hindered by the fiscal constraints on both the nation and our state. Reducing investments in workforce training end educations will cause long-term damage to our position in the global economy. As recovery begins, it is more critical than ever to support education, training and postsecondary strategies that ensure a skilled workforce necessary for the maintenance and growth of our economic sectors.

Respectfully submitted,

CONNECTICUT CENTER FOR ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, INC.

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