

To the Committee on Commerce
State of Connecticut

March 8, 2010

Re: Raised Bill 6525

My name is Karl Prewo

By way of introduction. I have spent a 40 plus year career in technology and new enterprise creation in Connecticut

Beginning in 1969, I spent

-30 years with United Technologies Corporation

-7 years as one of the founders and developers of the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, CCAT that included participation in the inception of the Connecticut SBIR initiative.

-and the last 3 years as an Angel investor and participant in the creation of several start up companies in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Thank you for the opportunity to add some remarks that I hope will be helpful in your deliberations of Raised Bill 6525.

First off, thank you for your strong mandate for Connecticut Innovations Inc to lead Connecticut in innovation and new enterprise growth. As an investor and entrepreneur, I appreciate clarity in knowing the roles of the many organizations we have available for assistance in the state.

One specific aspect of your mandate, however, seems out of place. That is Section 9 (New) which seeks to remove the SBIR office from CI. I believe that such a step would be detrimental to small company success and could potentially derail a program which has created a regional and national record of accomplishment that has raised Connecticut up in the eyes of entrepreneurs, government agencies and large corporations all over the USA. Please understand that this is not an overstatement, but a well substantiated fact as demonstrated by the nearly two thousand participants that have come to Connecticut for the past two National SBIR conferences.

It is important to remember that the national SBIR program is about creating successful businesses. It was, in fact, created because federal agencies and large US corporations were frustrated by the lack of business success of small start up companies that were developing the new technologies our nation needed to be globally competitive. Even now, the national SBIR program suffers in most states and even on the federal level, by not demonstrating a true ability to help small companies break out and become true economic engines of growth. Connecticut is recognized as being unique by our SBIR office's dynamic programs and its focus on total business enterprise success, not just winning SBIR grants. By having achieved integration into CI, it has been possible to provide "one stop" assistance for entrepreneurs that integrates SBIR success into a comprehensive business strategy and venture capital funding path. I suggest that, rather than separation, this partnership should be strengthened and aggressively leveraged as a central element of your strategy for jobs growth.

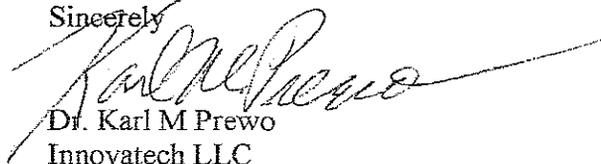
Connecticut's SBIR office was successfully launched and nurtured via the collaboration of Connecticut's Office for Workforce Competitiveness and the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology. This noteworthy achievement is one that both organizations can be justly proud. Through the tireless efforts of Director Deb Santy and her staff, Connecticut enjoys a national reputation of achievement that has the capacity to attract and help small companies become true job generators.

Just like in the growth of successful small companies, it has been important that SBIR has moved from its early government funded SBIR contract winning focused roots, into a commercially grounded, entrepreneurial, sustainable organization that is focused on breakout business growth and has all the regional and national connections to take businesses across what we have long called the "desert" that is littered with failure and survivors, but not job generators.

In conclusion, I request that you keep the SBIR initiative as an integral part of CI, where it can be most effective in meeting the core objectives of Connecticut's entrepreneurial transformation and job growth.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely



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