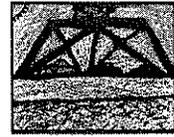


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JOHN DEStEFANO, JR.
Mayor



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**Mayor John DeStefano Jr., City of New Haven
Testimony in support of Governor's Bill 6390
An Act Concerning Access to Postsecondary Education
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
March 15, 2011**

Chairman Bye, Chairman Willis, My name is John DeStefano. I am the Mayor of the City of New Haven. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Governor's Bill No. 6390: An Act Concerning Access to Postsecondary Education.

Today, many of us wonder what kind of world will emerge from this recession. And although this recession continues to challenge us, Connecticut can best position itself to win the future and set a course for economic growth and wealth creation by removing barriers and providing better access to higher education for all our kids- native born and immigrant because in our increasingly knowledge based economy the muscle in our heads is much more important the muscles in our backs.

The New Haven my grandparents came to almost exactly 100 years ago experienced its greatest period of population and economic growth. That immigration fueled growing populations and resulted in more new workers to meet labor market demands and heightened entrepreneurial innovation. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Connecticut has a fast growing population of aging Baby Boomers. Between 2000 and 2030 retirees are expected to grow by 69 percent and a comparatively small number of young U.S.-born workers are available to replace them in the workforce. But the immigrant population is growing quickly and is expected to boost the number of young, employable adults.

Immigrants that come to this country are hard workers, entrepreneurs that create jobs. It is worth noting that in America between 1990 and 2005 immigrants started 1/4 of all venture backed companies.

Frankly New Haven and Connecticut benefit from the restrictive immigration policies of other nations. Population growth is essential to wealth creation, and in New Haven and in America; immigration has consistently driven that growth over our history. Countries that have stagnated, have by and large failed to integrate newcomers into their society and workforce. Connecticut and America are at their best when they are open and welcoming.

Immigration grows economies. It does not subtract from them. Entering as we are an increasingly complex knowledge based, globalized world the smart public policy makers will align our policies, communities and institutions to that future. And immigration has been, is and will be a big part of determining who the winners and losers of the future.

Our country is not a perfect place but the great thing about America is that we have always striven to make itself more perfect over time by relying on traditional values of hard work and good behavior. By tearing down barriers to education, Connecticut can position itself to best compete in a 21st century. This bill has my full support. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today.