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Testimony of Rick Witham

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Before Committee on Labor and Public Employees
SB 987 – An Act Requiring Community Workforce Agreements for Construction Projects at the Connecticut State University System
March 1, 2011

My name is Rick Witham and I am a(n) employee of KMK Insulation Inc., located in North Haven, who is a Member of Associated Builders and Contractors of Connecticut.

KMK Insulation [illegible] on construction projects in Connecticut and employs 37 Connecticut residents. Unfortunately, as proposed, SB 987 would prevent us from competing for [illegible] Connecticut State University System projects. This lack of competition [illegible] and further [illegible]. Therefore, I cannot support SB 987.

As proposed, [illegible] would not only detour the [illegible] construction industry from recovering from [illegible] unemployment, but it would create an insurmountable level of bureaucracy [illegible] a glaring conflict with Governor [illegible] Connecticut's state government [illegible] processes.

Financially, [illegible] Community Workforce Agreement on a state university project [illegible] taxpayers who pay for state university projects [illegible] mandating its use for one set [illegible] misguided governance. Merit shop [illegible] in Connecticut represent more than 80% of the workforce, however [illegible] Community Workforce Agreements would be used at the merit shop craftsmen [illegible]

CT's [illegible] recently spoke about the [illegible] would be approving by noting that [illegible] would lead to 1,200 [illegible] in the construction industry in Connecticut.

Mandated union-only agreements on public works projects are anti-competitive and detour open, fair and competitive bidding. PLA's drive up the cost of construction by reducing competition and effectively excluding mark shop craftsmen from staffing projects paid for by their own tax dollars. In the end, government-mandated construction contract agreements prevent taxpayers from getting the best possible product at the best possible price. As the state and local governments are squeezing every last cent from their revenue sources to keep the state, town, or city open for business, an arrangement like the Community Workforce Agreement should be scrutinized by the committee as to how much these agreements would cost the Connecticut [illegible] [illegible] include!

I believe that any Community Workforce Agreement would be detrimental to Connecticut by decreasing competition, increasing the costs, and discriminating against local contractors. This would be a terrible misuse of taxpayer money as Connecticut struggles to overcome a $3.7 bid [illegible].

SB 987 should [illegible] forward. It would [illegible] needed opportunities and competition [illegible] jobs as the majority of the construction industry would be unable to meet [illegible] unfair bid requirements.

On behalf of [illegible], I urge you to oppose [illegible].

2-25-11