

**Testimony of Alan Gemmell  
Cianbro Corporation**

**Before Committee on labor and Public Employees**

**SB987 – An ACT Requiring Community Workforce Agreements for Construction  
Projects at the Connecticut State University System**

**March 1, 2011**

Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski and respective members of the Committee on Labor and Public Employees, good afternoon, my name is Alan Gemmell from North Branford, CT and I am the Human Resources Manager at Cianbro Corporation located in Bloomfield, CT and a member of the Associated Builders and Contractors and the Independent Electrical Contractors. Cianbro is a 100% employee owned, self-insured, construction and construction services firm and has worked on construction projects in Connecticut for the last 25 years.

I am submitting my testimony to you today on behalf of Cianbro in opposition to SB 987. This bill if made law would require contractors to use only union labor on State University projects which would eliminate the ability of hundreds of Connecticut Contractors and Subcontractors to bid this work because they would be unable to use their own workforce as required in a under a Community Workforce Agreement.

We are specifically troubled by the union preference language in this bill that would create a highly restrictive and uncompetitive market. In the past 3 years, the construction industry in the United States has faced an unprecedented blight in funded projects both public and private causing contractors who had spent the previous decade growing their businesses to instead resuscitate their businesses by bidding work in markets that they may not be truly qualified to perform and wouldn't normally work in.

Simply put, by limiting competition in the construction markets, you limit the amount of bidders on a project and, when this happens, as basic economic modeling tells us, the best price and efficiencies are seldom realized. In other words, if this bill passed, the State of Connecticut and University System would likely end-up paying higher construction costs

unnecessarily; and eventually would pass those costs onto the taxpayer. Higher costs to the University, means higher costs to the State, means higher taxes to its citizens; a lose, lose situation for the State of Connecticut. On a personal note, as a taxpaying citizen of Connecticut myself and one who has a child currently attending a State University, I must say this scenario is very alarming to me and my family.

During these times when the unemployment rate in the construction industry is 17% and the price of doing a large construction project is so high, we don't understand why you would want to eliminate some of the competition on these projects in favor of the smallest percentage of the Connecticut construction workforce; the unions. Government policies should be making it easier to put people to work, not place unnecessary and artificial barriers in the way of job creation. Nor should any Bill impact someone's right to work or right to choose who they work for because there are no provisions in this Bill that would not guarantee worker safety or a secure pension.