



# GrowJobsCT

## MANUFACTURING MAKES CT'S FUTURE

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Testimony of John Harrity  
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Comments on "An Agenda for Action in the Special Session on Jobs"

Commerce Committee  
October 20, 2011

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, members of the committee: my name is John Harrity. I serve as Director of GrowJobsCT, a coalition of business, labor and community groups, along with elected officials, that focuses on the need to sustain and expand manufacturing jobs in the state of Connecticut.

I am a representative of the Machinists Union. I also serve on the Connecticut Education & Training Commission, and on the recently convened "Dream It. Do It." Committee being facilitated by CCAT.

I want to begin by congratulating the Malloy administration and those who worked to develop this agenda. These initiatives address some of the biggest concerns regarding the growth of business, and jobs, in our state.

I want to mention a few areas where I believe more has to be done, and can be accomplished even in this brief session:

- 1) Incumbent worker training. We spend \$500,000 a year on this. Rhode Island spends \$8 million; Massachusetts spends \$24 million. This is money well-spent. An employer must match funding dollar-for-dollar, but as a result the business gets an upgraded work force, and the workers learn new skills, without layoffs or any employee displacement.
- 2) Vo-Tech school funding. \$20 million into three vo-techs is not enough. These schools are the most promising institutions for young people to move directly into good, skilled jobs. They are also the key source of skilled, work-ready employees that business needs and says they cannot find. More funding is needed.
- 3) Support for fuel cells.
  - a. Clear up sect. 127 of PA 10-80, concerning utility ownership of power generation. The language is in the bill at the request of the fuel cell industry. But due to what I understand to be simply a clerical error, fuel cells were inadvertently left out – which means utilities can only own solar power generation. This should, just by virtue of fairness, be corrected now.

- b. A moratorium on the sales tax on fuel cells – even as brief as two years – would be a major boost to sales. This initiative would definitely pay back more than it costs, with increased sales leading to more jobs and economic benefits to our state.
- 4) PACE and the Renewable Energy and Efficient Energy Finance Program. I do not know whether these two initiatives “made the cut” for the special session. But they should have, and should be supported – together they provide world-class mechanisms for helping fund both commercial and residential renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. It is what we must do to advance the new energy economy.

Thank you for allowing me to speak with you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.