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Testimony of the Northwest CT Chamber of Commerce in support of SB 1024: An Act Concerning Modernizing the State's Telecommunications Laws

On behalf of the Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, I write to express our support for Raised Bill 1024, "An Act Modernizing the State's Telecommunications Laws."

My organization's goal is to advance the general welfare and prosperity of Northwest Connecticut, ensuring its citizens and all areas of its business community prosper, but the reality of Connecticut's economy today does not meet this goal. Our unemployment numbers are high, our state budget needs to be reined in and, without intervention, an economic crisis is looming in our future.

This is the year to be proactive. Connecticut has dealt with two years of a painful recession, only to lag behind while other states forge ahead. The state Labor Department reports that since 1990, Connecticut has grown by fewer than 1,000 employed workers in our state. As the private sector adds jobs every month for the past year, Connecticut faces a prediction of employment growth of less than one percent in the next five years – this will place us dead last in the entire United States.

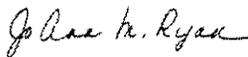
In President Obama's recent Wall Street Journal article, he recommends removing burdensome regulations that hurt businesses and people, bringing our regulatory system into this century, encouraging business growth and increased investment. The Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce agrees and adoption of "An Act Modernizing the State's Telecommunications Laws" will help do just that.

Private investment in our state is the answer. We need the dollars of large corporations and smaller businesses alike. The only way we can encourage companies to invest in Connecticut is to reform the laws on the books and open our doors to their businesses.

It's not impossible. Other states have done it over the years and now, in these tough times, they are the ones benefitting from monthly private sector job growth. Isn't it time Connecticut recognized what's at stake? With 169,000 people in our state seeking jobs and another 400,000 who have given up or are underemployed, we've got the manpower available. Now, we just need to show these businesses we are creating a business environment that's worth the investment risk.

I thank you for your consideration and urge adoption of Raised Bill 1024, "An Act Modernizing the State's Telecommunications Laws."

Sincerely,



JoAnn M. Ryan
President & CEO