



# State of Connecticut

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591

**REPRESENTATIVE CHARLES D. CLEMONS, JR.**  
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FOURTH DISTRICT

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### **Statement in Support of HB 5974 An Act Redefining "Minority Business Enterprise"**

Good Afternoon Senator Slossberg, Representative Morin and distinguished members of the Government, Administration & Elections Committee. My name is Representative Charles "Don" Clemons, Jr. from Bridgeport, CT and I would like the committee's consideration of the proposal to redefine "minority business enterprise". Allow me to briefly explain my concerns.

In an effort to create diversity in business ownership, our state government created minority set-aside programs for women and minority owned small businesses. These programs allow authorities to designate purchases, contracts for construction and services to a percentage of minority owned businesses. This effectively empowers them by offering a chance to compete with superior businesses while enabling them to perform at a much higher level.

The general definition of a "minority business enterprise" is a female or a member of an ethnic minority who is the majority owner (51%) of the company and the company must be able to demonstrate current viability and sound prospects for future success.

The issue I have is the possibility of others using minority-front companies to defraud the government. To deter this from happening, I believe we need to properly define "minority business enterprise" by distinguishing the difference between minorities and non-minority women. There is a growing concern regarding the amount of contracts granted to businesses owned by non-minority women as opposed to businesses owned by the rest of the minorities.

I believe it would also be beneficial to implement a disparity study concerning the legitimacy of any minority owned business and to reveal the number of approved "non-minority women business" contracts compared to all other "minority contracts" approved by the state (please review Proposed Bill No. 6167 AAC Minority business Enterprises And The State Set-Aside Program). Without doing the study, we will not be able to affectively track fraudulent activities.

Of course, I am not seeking to exclude non-minority women from any of the state's set-aside programs. That is not the intent of this proposed legislation. My only intention is to create diversity in the marketplace and to encourage fair business practices in order for all to prosper. Thank you for your time and I am available for any questions you may have.