

TESTIMONY OF LOUIS W. BACH  
OF THE CONNECTICUT BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
BEFORE THE COMMERCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Good morning Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commerce Committee. My name is Louis W. Bach and I am testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA's 10,000 member companies represent the broad diversity of Connecticut's private sector. These businesses rank among the most innovative and productive in the world.

**SB-1 AAC CONNECTICUT JOBS AND THE ECONOMY** –CBIA is pleased to see proposals in **SB-1** that would build on the foundation of the bipartisan jobs bill passed last October. That legislation has generated much interest in the business community as much for its content as for the business-like manner in which the various programs are being administered.

The Small Business Express program has been warmly received by our membership and we have worked hard to promote it and to support the Department of Community and Economic Development as they have rolled out that package.

As businesses consider whether to make hiring decisions as the economy picks up speed, these types of programs often makes the difference where a company is ready to expand its workforce but is nonetheless holding back due to lingering economic uncertainty.

The eligibility changes in **SB-1** – from the program's current fifty employees to a proposed one hundred employees – will expand the number of companies taking the step to add capacity as the economy rebounds from its recent lows.

Additional grants to incentivize hiring and on-the-job training are welcome additions to this legislation as well.

While CBIA generally supports **SB-1**, we oppose section 8 of the bill, as well as **SB-79 AAC UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS AND DISCRIMINATORY HIRING PRACTICES**, and any like measures that would increase the risks and costs of hiring in Connecticut.

A decision to elevate employment status to the same degree of protection as race, religion, or gender in civil rights statutes dilutes the significance of existing protections and works to open the door for an ever-expanding list of protected characteristics having less to do with preventing truly discriminatory hiring practices and more to do with removing an employer's legitimate discretion in hiring decisions.

This legislation would also subject employers to potential legal action that would be very difficult to defend against. The bill's language requires no evidence of causation, nor does it require the establishment of some nexus between a hiring decision and an individual's employment status, something that would be difficult to show in many cases.

This measure would chill hiring just as unemployment numbers are coming down and businesses are looking to add jobs. Connecticut's employers are sympathetic to those who are out of work and welcome legislation that would encourage job growth. Creating new potential liabilities for employers who are trying to add jobs doesn't make sense in this or any economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I would be happy to entertain any questions you may have.