



Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. I am Gail Coppage, Director of Innovation and Outreach for the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR). This testimony is provided on behalf of the seventeen institutions, but primarily the twelve community colleges, that comprise the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Raised Bill 292, *An Act Aligning Connecticut's Intellectual Capital with the Business Community*.

The Board of Regents is pleased and proud to be considered the educational and training partner for this legislation.

The Board of Regents for Higher Education is heavily invested and interested in supporting the education and training needs of new and expanding industries in Connecticut, as well as supporting certain existing industries identified by the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, in consultation with the Office of Workforce Competitiveness, as industries with a high demand for skilled workers.

The Board of Regents works in tandem with the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), the CT Department of Labor and the Office of Workforce Competitiveness to support the needs of industry today and tomorrow. Representatives from the BOR serve on a number of committees with our sister agencies, all in support of growing an educated, skilled and talented workforce able to move quickly into available jobs in Connecticut.

The Community College System network of twelve community colleges located throughout Connecticut offer a wide array of diverse education and training opportunities for career training, through both credit and non-credit certificates and credentials, including Associate's Degrees. The role of Continuing Education within the Community Colleges serves as a flexible, affordable, efficient and effective way for Connecticut residents to receive appropriate levels of education and training leading to employment and economic self-sufficiency.

Because of the ability of the Community Colleges to work closely with industry as well as the economic development agencies, education and training programs can be quickly created and provided to the general public, especially within the arena of Continuing Education.

Customized Training is offered to an incumbent workforce in order to support the changing needs within industry. Additional academic programming is available and can be provided, such as offering Shop Math or other similar types of academic coursework including soft skills training.

The Board of Regents is working to review existing assessment efforts across the system of seventeen institutions and agree that it is important to be able to measure existing skills of individual workers before those incumbent workers enter specialized training programs, so that the training program is appropriate to the worker and the worker is poised for success and completion of the training program. Our system is currently working closely with the *Dream It. Do It. Initiative* through collaborative efforts with the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT) and the Manufacturing Institute of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). This initiative supports industry recognized credentials and opportunities for skills measurement including incorporating the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) which determines appropriate skill levels. The BOR is also supporting the efforts of the Connecticut Department of Labor in their grant proposal efforts for a Workforce Innovation Grant, allowing for the review and opportunity to provide appropriate assessment measures for students. We understand the critical importance of these measures and continue to look for external resources to support such efforts.

The Board of Regents for Higher Education will continue to remain an active partner with industry to further support economic growth in Connecticut. We will be happy to continue these conversations with the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee and appreciate the opportunity to join the conversation with the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.