

Testimony by Susan Palisano
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Before the Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement
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Testimony for Raised Bill 383: An Act Concerning Manufacturing Internship

Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Willis and members of the Committee. My name is Susan Palisano and I am Director of Education & Training at the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT) in East Hartford. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Raised Bill 383, *An Act Concerning Manufacturing Internships*.

Through both its own K-12 educational programming, and as the lead organization for "Connecticut. Dream It. Do It." - the state implementation of the National Association of Manufacturers/Manufacturing Institute's outreach and engagement initiative - CCAT has been a diligent participant in opportunities that introduce youth to careers in manufacturing and develop the future skilled workforce pipeline. We are pleased to support the passage of this bill, which addresses an issue recently raised by "Dream It. Do It." Steering Committee members regarding barriers to internships for students under the age of 18.

We appreciate the fact that this bill contains language providing assurances that any young person permitted to work on a machine shop floor has gained the necessary skills through approved training programs to make their experience both safe and rewarding. However, we do have several comments regarding continued potential limitations on manufacturing internships for all young people who wish to pursue these opportunities for the Committee to consider.

We are concerned that the bill does not make appropriate accommodations for students under the age of 18 from any and all educational settings to be considered eligible for manufacturing internships. For instance, we draw the Committee's attention to the continued use of the phrase "bona fide apprenticeship courses" without a specific definition of who or what determines that this requirement has been met. Additionally, we question whether there are scenarios that exist where an internship placement does not qualify as "employment" and therefore would not be subject to the age restriction waiver. Of particular note are after-school or summer placements that are not part of an apprenticeship, vocational-technical, or credit-bearing program.

Finally, we would like assurances that by adding new language defining specific instances in which youth under the age of 18 are allowed to be present on manufacturing shop floors, we do not eliminate those non-internship opportunities currently enjoyed by younger students such as site visits and job shadowing.

On behalf of CCAT and its "Dream It. Do It." partners, thank you very much for your consideration of these potential modifications to Raised Bill #383, to guarantee that all of Connecticut's young men and women are able to participate in meaningful opportunities leading to rewarding careers in manufacturing.