



CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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2/19/2013

Good Morning Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone , and members of the Commerce Committee.

My name is Todd Berch and I am with the Connecticut AFL-CIO.

I am here today to testify on behalf of the 900 affiliated local unions that represent over 200,000 union members from all 169 cities and towns of Connecticut in support of Proposed Bill No. 619 an act establishing a futures commission.

This state has prided itself throughout history as being not only the inventor but the innovator of products used worldwide and our manufacturing workforce is its strength. Though there has been an unfortunate lack of employment throughout most sectors the manufacturing industry speculates that the highest demand will be for skilled manufacturing workers. We support the goals of the proposed commission due to the resurgence of manufacturing needs on the horizon. Recently there has been a lack of manufacturing jobs in Connecticut which has resulted in layoffs, plant closings, and companies moving to other states or countries. This has left the labor market with an aging workforce and a lack of mentoring or apprentice programs to form the next generation of skilled worker.

Connecticut has been the fortunate benefactor of defense contracts and the Connecticut AFL-CIO fully supports those industries. Recent discussion about defense budget cuts shows these industries coming under pressure. We support economic conversion strategies that would enable defense contractors to increase opportunities beyond defense manufacturing and have policy to capture commercial manufacturing markets.

It is our understanding that the intent of this commission would take into consideration an alliance of the vocational school system, available skilled workers, and industry needs to develop industrial policy creating a viable and sustainable industry that by default would create jobs, an increased standard of living, and product demand for Connecticut manufactured products once again.

We appreciate the committee holding this public hearing and would be happy to address your questions at this time.

Thank You

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