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CONNECTICUT BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
BEFORE THE  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
FEBRUARY 15th, 2013**

Good Morning Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. My name is Laura Cummings and I am testifying today on behalf of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA's 10,000 member companies represent the broad diversity of Connecticut's businesses, and the vast majority of our members are small companies with fewer than 50 employees.

Thank you for hearing testimony regarding CBIA's support of **S.B. 875- AN ACT CONCERNING THE DONATION OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

This bill seeks to indemnify any person who makes a donation of equipment or supplies to a local or regional board of education. CBIA supports this bill in an effort to provide modern equipment to Connecticut students to ensure they are well trained to become tomorrow's competitive workforce.

Donations from private industry have historically played an important role in supplying tools and material to the vocational-technical school system. However, the fear of being sued has begun to deter companies like United Technologies Corporation and its subsidiaries from donating.

In April 2011, The CT Mirror reported that Pratt & Whitney offered to donate a jet engine worth more than \$1 million for use by students at Connecticut Aero Tech School. However, Pratt ultimately withdrew their offer due to potential liability issues that could arise from its use at the school.

Connecticut's vocational-technical schools have long struggled to obtain and maintain modern equipment for students to use. Recently, the Superintendent of the Vo-Tech schools stated that \$5 million a year would be needed for the next several years to bring the schools' equipment up to date. With shrinking State resources, donations from private business are necessary to fill the gap.

Without the proper equipment to train with, our students are less able to become the advanced workforce needed by tomorrow's employers. This is why we urge your **support for S.B 875.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.