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Testimony of the City of New Haven
Before the Joint Committee on Government Administration and Elections

Regarding
SB 206 and SB 284

Submitted by
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City of New Haven
February 22, 2013

The City of New Haven would like to express support for SB 206 and SB 284 which are intended to increase minority, female, resident and apprentice work on State-funded construction projects. The City takes a passionate interest in this issue given the socio-economic makeup of the community and the many large scale construction projects recently completed or now underway within New Haven.

At a local level, New Haven's Commission on Equal Opportunity (CEO) has the responsibility to review, monitor and enforce the equal opportunity, affirmative action and contract compliance laws as they apply to contractors and subcontractors doing business with the City. CEO was created in 1964 and is the nation's oldest municipal civil rights agency. It is not just a regulatory agency, however.

Construction work requires a high level of skill, personal readiness and attention to on-the-job safety. CEO, therefore, focuses on community outreach, training and statewide partnerships to develop a skilled workforce and provide value to the many contractors that work on important State construction projects. To that end, CEO's contract enforcement division has established a standard of compliance with contractors in New Haven with success rates over 38% minority, 25% resident and 9% female EEO participation. Construction Workforce Initiative 2 managed by CEO offers intensive, skill-based construction training in partnership with Yale University and the Housing Authority of New Haven.

This unique combination of skill-based employment readiness and regulatory oversight has proven to be a successful model for New Haven. Since 2005 more than 3,760 residents have worked on local school construction projects earning \$23 million in wages. This locally grown labor force provides a multiplier benefit since these workers spend a significant portion of their earnings in the local economy. Given the high unemployment rate, which now stands at 11.3% (and 3.5% higher than the state average), this is a critical time to broaden our impact and implement best practices on State construction projects here in New Haven.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter of critical importance.