



March 18, 2013

Testimony on the following bills:

Raised Bill HB 6562: AN ACT CONCERNING ADULT EDUCATION AND TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

Raised Bill SB 904: AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONALLY COORDINATED CONTEXTUALIZED LEARNING AND CAREER PATHWAYS PARTNERSHIPS

Raised Bill HB 6430: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL COUNCIL TO SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by: David Downes, Vice President, Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education and Director of Adult and Continuing Education, West Hartford Public Schools

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education, a statewide professional organization representing providers of mandated adult education.

Representative Willis, Senator Bye and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

HB 6562: While CAACE has been a strong advocate for better approaches to help adult learners access postsecondary education, we do not support the proposed changes to current state law in this bill. By adding college preparation classes to the other mandated programs that adult education provides, this bill has the unintended consequence of stretching the current funding for basic skills, ESL, citizenship and high school diploma programs to a breaking point. If adult education funding is now barely adequate to meet these needs of the most disenfranchised of our population, how can we dip into the same pot of local and state funds to pay for added college remediation courses?

The issue is not that adult education programs need a change in current law in order to provide college preparation; our programs have done such work for many years with the help of other funding, such as Nellie Mae grants, and we could provide such programs through our enrichment programs on a sliding scale fee basis or in partnership with state colleges and workforce investment boards, along with private funders. Some of this cooperation is already happening in at least one of the regional partnerships set up by the state colleges under the law passed last year to limit college remediation for entering students. Our only issue at this time is that this regional cooperation is just beginning. If

this bill could be improved to make adult education more of a partner in the college remediation issue, then the language that amends state statutes should be removed and the bill should mandate that adult education services be considered in the remediation planning by the regional groups that higher education has already set up. Ideally, the legislation should also provide a reasonable sum of new money to support the regional higher ed groups that devise a workable and comprehensive remediation program. that effectively deals with the problem of student preparation for higher education.

SB 904: This bill speaks to regional coordination, and the intent of the bill is to have the general statutes empower the regional adult literacy partnerships, authorized under Executive Order 35, to direct multiple public funding sources toward proven models of successful career pathways programs. Unfortunately, the wording of SB 904 mistakenly authorizes just one of the regional workforce boards, Capital Workforce Partners, to be coordinating all of these regional efforts. Otherwise, the bill advances the goals of these regional groups as intended in the original Executive Order.

HB 6430: This is an ambitious bill that establishes a regional council to coordinate educational and training efforts under the Office of Workforce Competitiveness. CAACE supports the general intentions of this bill because it focuses and aligns efforts to improve the state's workforce development efforts.