

Testimony of Eric W. Gjede
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Before the Judiciary Committee
Hartford, CT
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**Testifying on SB-1156 An Act Concerning The Right To A Jury Trial In Certain Actions Alleging
Discriminatory Practices**

Good Afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and members of the Judiciary Employees Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA) which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

CBIA has concerns about SB-1156 that can easily be alleviated with a slight modification to the language in the bill.

Presumably, the intent of this bill is to ensure that a person who elects to have CHRO release jurisdiction over their discrimination claim has the right to a jury trial rather than a bench trial. However, we are concerned that the language of this bill would prevent employers and employees from agreeing to waive their right to a trial in order to arbitrate employment discrimination issues.

Arbitrating these claims is beneficial to both employers and employees because it is less adversarial and costly, uses an impartial arbitrator, and provides a quick resolution for all parties involved. More often than not, it allows an employee and employer to move beyond the incident that led to the complaint in a timelier fashion and with less resentment on either side.

We urge the committee to clarify the language of bill 1156 to ensure the parties have the option to waive their right to a trial in favor of arbitration or other alternative dispute resolution method.