

**Testimony of Laura Cummings  
Staff Attorney, CBIA  
Before the Committee on Labor and Public Employees  
January 31, 2013**

**H.B. 5713: AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF LABOR HISTORY IN THE PUBLIC  
SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

I am Laura Cummings, Staff Attorney at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA) which represents the interests of more than 10,000 companies across the state, the vast majority of which are businesses of 50 or fewer employees.

The business community has a vested interest in a quality education for all of Connecticut students. To ensure our students are well prepared to meet the workforce demands of a global 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, we must continue to close Connecticut's achievement gap and focus educational resources on core subjects. As the current public school curriculum teaches our students about the labor movement's contributions to American history, H.B. 5713 would unnecessarily divert precious resources away for our efforts to close the achievement gap. For this reason CBIA is opposed to H.B. 5713.

H.B. 5713 AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF LABOR HISTORY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM would mandate the teaching of labor history and law as part of the prescribed course of study in the public school curriculum.

Connecticut students currently take American History in the eighth and eleventh grades. As the labor movement was a central part of the Industrial Revolution, Connecticut students are already being exposed to one of the most important chapters of labor history.

Mandating that our history teachers expand the coverage of labor history in their curriculum would result in cutting back on other meaningful topics such as America's founding, the Civil War, the westward expansion and its impact on Native Americans and the Civil Rights Movement.

With only one-third of Connecticut's low-income, African American and Hispanic/Latino students performing at grade level in reading, it is vital that our students spend valuable class time focused on core curriculum. Thus, we must focus our educational resources to ensure that we continue to close Connecticut's achievement gap.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.