



FEBRUARY 11, 2014

**CAPITAL WORKFORCE PARTNERS TESTIMONY –
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

GOOD EVENING. MY NAME IS JIM BOUCHER AND I AM PROVIDING THIS TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF THOMAS PHILLIPS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF CAPITAL WORKFORCE PARTNERS, IN REGARDS TO OUR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES RELATING TO LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES.

AS ONE OF THE STATE'S FIVE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS, **CAPITAL WORKFORCE PARTNERS**, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE'S DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND NUMEROUS MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS, HAS PROVEN TO BE NIMBLE, ADAPTABLE AND OUTCOME DRIVEN IN IMPLEMENTING STATE PROGRAMS SUCH AS: **STEP UP**, SERVING UNEMPLOYED, INCLUDING VETERANS, **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT** AND **JOBS FUNNELS** SUPPORTING THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, ALL SERVING THOUSANDS OF YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH NEEDED TRAINING AND PLACEMENT INTO JOBS, WHILE ALSO CREATING TAXPAYERS, AND REDUCING PUBLICLY FUNDED SAFETY NET EXPENDITURES.

THAT "NIMBLENESS" IS AN IMPERATIVE WITH A **DEMOGRAPHIC TSUNAMI** HEADING OUR WAY - CT HAS ONE OF THE OLDEST WORKFORCES IN THE NATION, AND AN INSUFFICIENT POOL OF TALENT TO REPLACE THOSE WHO WILL RETIRE IN THE YEARS AHEAD. WE NEED TO ACT NOW.

WE APPLAUD THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED **\$10-MILLION RENEWAL OF STEP UP FUNDS**, AND THE CREATION OF THE NEW **PLATFORM TO EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM** INVESTMENT OF \$3.6 MILLION THAT WILL GET HUNDREDS OF LONG TERM-UNEMPLOYED BACK TO WORK.

WE ALSO APPLAUD THE \$4.5 MILLION INVESTMENT IN THE **STATE'S SUCCESSFUL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM** THAT IS ADMINISTERED BY THE STATE'S FIVE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS. THIS PROGRAM CONTINUES TO HAVE POSITIVE OUTCOMES AS NOTED IN THE RECENTLY COMPLETED

STATEWIDE REPORT. YET, WHILE OVER 5,000 YOUTH WERE PROVIDED OPPORTUNITIES LAST SUMMER, STILL 5,000 WERE TURNED AWAY. FURTHER, THE DOZENS OF MUNICIPALITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THE PROGRAM WISH THEY HAD MORE TIME AND CAPACITY TO START THEIR HIRING PROCESS SOONER AND PRODUCE BETTER MATCHES FOR EMPLOYERS. THEREFORE, WE ARE HOPING FOR CONSIDERATION OF AN ADDITIONAL \$500,000, TO EITHER PROVIDE EARLIER START UP TIMES – OR – INCREASE NUMBERS OF YOUTH SERVED, DEPENDING ON EACH REGION'S NEEDS.

FURTHER, WE SUPPORT THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE'S INVESTMENT IN **CONTEXTUALIZED LEARNING** RESOURCES (TO SOME KNOWN AS IBEST). WE ENCOURAGE A CONTINUATION OF TANF FUNDING AT \$18.6 MILLION (AS PROPOSED IN THE ORIGINAL BUDGET) AND AN ADDITIONAL \$1.3 MILLION FOR IBEST.

WE ALSO SUPPORT THE PROPOSED \$600,000 **VETERANS' OPPORTUNITY PILOT**, TO HIRE NEW EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS AND JOB DEVELOPERS. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THIS PROGRAM WOULD BE BETTER OPTIMIZED BY CAPITALIZING ON THE EXISTING CT DEPT. OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD PARTNERSHIP SYSTEM, AND THE WORKFORCE PROFESSIONALS ALREADY IN PLACE AT THE STATE'S 17 ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS KNOWN AS CTWORKS, AND THE AMERICAN JOB CENTER NETWORK. WE STAND READY TO ENSURE THAT MORE VETERANS ARE PLACED IN EMPLOYMENT AND ARE CONNECTED TO HOUSING.

OUR TOP PRIORITY IS BETTER SUPPORT OF THE STATE'S JOBS FUNNELS, THE THREE YEAR USDOL GRANT FOR THE JOBS FUNNEL IS SUNSETTING THIS JUNE, CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY IS ON THE RISE, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME AGING OUT ATTRITION OF THE CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE IS INCREASING. THE \$450,000 PROPOSED INCREASE ABOVE THE EXISTING \$403,750 IS WELL BELOW THE \$2.5-MILLION NEEDED TO PROPERLY SUPPORT THIS SUCCESSFUL STATEWIDE PROGRAM, OVER THE YEARS THIS PROGRAM HAS PUT THOUSANDS OF UNEMPLOYED, INCLUDING MANY EX-OFFENDERS, BACK INTO WORK ON ESTABLISHED CAREER PATHWAYS PARTNERING WITH CTDOL AND THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES, THIS PROGRAM PROVIDES PRE-EMPLOYMENT CONSTRUCTION-RELATED TRAINING AND PLACEMENT. PLUS, WE NEED TO DO MORE TO PREPARE THE THOUSANDS OF WORKERS

THAT WILL BE NEEDED FOR THE \$5 BILLION 10 YEAR NATURAL GAS CONVERSION AND OTHER JOB CREATING ENERGY STRATEGIES SUPPORTED BY THIS LEGISLATURE. WITHOUT THE SIX JOBS FUNNELS, OUT-OF-STATE CONTRACTORS AND WORKERS WILL REAP THE BENEFITS OF THIS CONSTRUCTION BOOM UNDERWAY. AN ADDITIONAL \$1.5 MILLION ON TOP OF THE NEW \$450,000 IS NEEDED.

CAPITAL WORKFORCE PARTNERS, AND THE OTHER FOUR CONNECTICUT WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS, LINKING WITH THE STATE'S EDUCATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LABOR PARTNERS, ARE POISED AND READY TO FURTHER SUPPORT THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

IN CLOSING, STEADY PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN GETTING CT BACK TO WORK! WE JUST NEED TO BRING IT UP A NOTCH BY BETTER SUPPORTING THE STATE'S JOBS FUNNELS THE NEEDS OF THE LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED, INCREASING TRAINING TO PROVIDE SKILLS BUSINESSES NEED, AND BUILDING OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE THROUGH THE STATE'S YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM. BUSINESSES ARGUE FOR "TALENT NOW! CAPITAL WORKFORCE PARTNERS IS READY TO STEP UP, AS NEEDED, TO CONTINUE TO CONNECT TALENT CREATION WITH BUSINESS AND JOB CREATION.