

March 3, 2014

Connecticut General Assembly  
Commerce Committee  
Room 110, Capitol Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Members of the Commerce Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

This letter is in support of HB 5403 which requests funding for the expansion of the Connecticut Invention Convention, (CIC) an educational non-profit organization which the University of Connecticut's School of Engineering considers a vital partner in our outreach programs and in building the pipeline for Connecticut's "Innovation Ecosystem."

For over 15 years, UConn's School of Engineering and CIC have partnered on the support, development and expansion of school-based programs in Connecticut schools, fostering interest in STEM and careers in inventing, innovation and entrepreneurship. That partnership has been both as an outreach program from the School of Engineering to educate students in grades K-8 about our Engineering School, as well as a commitment from the School to support the teaching of inventing and innovation skills as critical to the future of Connecticut's workforce. We are proud to host the state wide finals event every year since 1999 at UConn's Gampel Pavilion, attended by over 5000 people, which includes participation by many of our faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, as well as corporate sponsors.

The CIC's reach to Connecticut schools has increased dramatically over the past few years, including a 34% expansion in just this current year to more than 165 schools in Connecticut. This rapid growth requires additional funding to continue and sustain the organization while it serves ever growing student involvement in learning skills which will be valuable not only to them, but to employers in Connecticut, and the competitiveness of Connecticut nationally and globally.

We urge you to give full consideration to the request in HB 5403 for funding the continued expansion of the Connecticut Invention Convention.

Sincerely,



Kazem Kazerounian  
Dean & Professor