

Chairman Perone, Chairman LeBeau, Members of the Commerce Committee, for the record my name is Terry Cholewa and I live in Griswold. I am the Vice President of the Eastern Connecticut Performing Arts Association. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of SB 141, AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR THE EASTERN CONNECTICUT PERFORMING ARTS ASSOCIATION. This bill would authorize up to \$500,000 for the ECPAA for the renovation and remodeling of a performing arts center to promote the performing arts, theater education, economic development and tourism.

Three years ago, Eastern Connecticut Performing Arts Association was a dream. An idea that was formed by a few folks who love their community, the arts and who believe in the possibility of change. The change I'm speaking of includes a significant improvement in our community's image, the ability to spur business development and the continued educational opportunities for our youth and adults. Thanks to the passion of our Board of Directors, the support of our local community and the tremendous talent in Eastern Connecticut, ECPAA has earned a reputation of providing quality performances and fantastic educational classes within our community.

We are eager to take the next step on our journey and find a permanent space. We believe that launching this project will attract audiences who will support local businesses thus creating new jobs. The arts industry influences a significant amount of event-related spending whether at local restaurants, retail stores and hotels. A study named "Americans for the Arts" revealed the average spending of a person attending an event is \$27.79 in addition to the cost of admission. I can share with you that last weekend I was in Manchester, NH for a performance and I spent well above \$27.79 during my visit.

Lastly, the performing arts center will invite tourists to our region generating cultural activity and creating a social impact. Residents are hungry for opportunity and community growth. Eastern Connecticut is rich in history but now is the time for us to build a future. A future that encourages local residents and visitors to stroll down Main Street with their families, attend a show, eat at a great restaurant and shop at a local retailer. I believe that the Eastern Connecticut Performing Arts Center is the catalyst to a new era in eastern Connecticut. An era that generates economic and social growth, supports educational opportunities and promotes the arts.

Thank you again for allowing me to share my testimony with you today. I appreciate the opportunity.