



**Testimony of Kevin Flanagan  
Flanagan Industries**

**Before**

**Commerce Committee  
March 6, 2014**

**Regarding**

**Raised Bill No. 305 - An Act Concerning Funding for the "Dream It. Do It."  
Manufacturing Pipeline Program.**

Good morning, my name is Kevin Flanagan and I am Vice President and co-owner of Flanagan Industries which is located in Glastonbury, CT. We are a 68 year old family run business with approximately 100 employees. We produce large diameter, complex machines cases that are used in both the aero and land based gas turbine industry. I am speaking this morning to support Bill No. 305 to provide for "Connecticut. Dream It. Do. It."

My company first became involved in "Dream It. Do It." last year, when we were a sponsor for one of the events that was held at the old Oakdale Music Theatre in Wallingford, CT. When I signed up to attend, I had no idea what to expect. I figured that I would meet a few kids and tell them what we do, and perhaps spark some interest in their young minds about the possibility of going down the advanced manufacturing road. What I witnessed was hundreds of kids who were not only very excited about being there, but also listened to what myself and the other exhibitors had to say!

As our company has been experiencing steady growth over the past 6 to 8 years, one of the biggest things holding us back was the complete lack of skilled workers in the machining trade. The average age of our workers 10 years ago was well over 55. It was at that time, that my brother Ken became actively involved with Asnuntuck Community College up in Enfield, CT. We started sponsoring scholarships to promising individuals and began our own apprentice program. To date, we have provided over 20 scholarships, and I'm proud to say, that most of these individuals are still with our company. Many of which, are running our newest and most expensive machine tools, working on complex jet engine cases that cost 10's of thousands of dollars.

As successful as this apprentice program has been for our growth, we along with the hundreds of other aerospace machine shops in and around Connecticut still need more qualified workers to fill the openings that currently exist. These existing openings will pale in comparison to what will be out there in 2015 / 2016 and beyond when the aerospace tsunami hits Connecticut.

We need to continue to educate high school and junior high students, so that they can hopefully start gearing their curriculum towards manufacturing. Strong skills in algebra, trigonometry and geometry are crucial, and better off if started early in high school.

Since 2011, Connecticut. Dream It. Do It. has been out there, leading the charge to educate our up and coming workforce. To help them get on an early career path that will prove to be very rewarding while not having to take on college debt in many cases in excess of \$100,000. The work they have done with thousands of students across Connecticut to show them what careers in manufacturing are all about and the value of working hard in school will pay off for companies like mine in the future. Through Dream It. Do It., students have had an opportunity to visit companies such as ours in Glastonbury to see first hand what advanced manufacturing really is.

Funding this program provides the opportunity to build on the success of the State's investment in and commitment to manufacturing. By focusing efforts on building the skilled manufacturing pipeline of the future, Connecticut. Dream It. Do It. will enable Flanagan Industries and hundreds of other Connecticut's manufacturers to attract the skilled talent we so desperately need to continue to grow and succeed in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today.