



**Ward Leonard**  
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## **Testimony of Michael Clute**

**Ward Leonard Electric Company**

**Before**

**Commerce Committee**

**March 6, 2014**

**Regarding**

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

My name is Mike Clute and I am President of Ward Leonard Electric Company in Thomaston, CT. I am appearing in support of Raised Bill No. 305 to provide continued funding for "Connecticut. Dream It. Do It." so it can continue to actively create and implement activities to enhance the development of Connecticut's current and future manufacturing workforce pipeline.

Ward Leonard provides highly engineered motors, controls and integrated solutions customized to solve difficult challenges for our customers in the Department of Defense and Heavy Industry worldwide. For more than 120 years, our products have harnessed power for complex, technical and mission-critical infrastructure applications in harsh operating environments. Our success to date is due solely to the outstanding 165 highly skilled manufacturers in our Thomaston headquarters along with the over 200 Connecticut small business manufacturers and service providers located throughout the State that support our operation.

Ward Leonard has continued to grow in the face of lean economic times and we have aggressive plans for future growth. A primary predicate to making the substantial investments necessary for us to achieve our strategic growth objectives is having the absolute confidence that there will be a sustained availability of individuals that not only are motivated to enter the manufacturing sector, but that have also acquired the fundamental skills necessary to fill both the newly created, highly skilled roles as well as backfill the openings created by the retirement of an aging workforce. I believe that the



Connecticut. Dream It. Do It. Program has and will continue to provide the essential elements to fulfill that investment predicate if this Committee exercises its wisdom and supports the continued funding of an already proven investment in Connecticut's manufacturing future.

Since 2011, Connecticut. Dream It. Do It. has led efforts to attract the next generation of the manufacturing workforce by collaborating with industry, education, and economic and workforce development organizations throughout the State to coordinate career awareness activities, promote best practices, and provide opportunities and resources for students, families, and educators that highlight manufacturing careers and encourage achievement in STEM. For the past two years, Governor Malloy has officially declared October as "Connecticut. Dream It. Do It. Manufacturing Month," during which nearly 1,000 students from 26 middle and high schools have been involved in regional "Manufacturing Mania" events that gave them the chance to talk with manufacturers about careers and the high-tech skills needed in today's manufacturing.

I became actively involved with the Connecticut. Dream It. Do It. team last year as co-chair of its Steering Committee because I strongly believe in the commitment of the organization's leadership and diverse membership to touch and motivate our potential future manufacturers in the critical early years when they and their parents are just beginning to discuss career options for their future.

In conclusion, Raised Bill No. 305 provides the opportunity to sustain the success of the State's investment in, and commitment to, the manufacturing sector. By focusing on creating awareness and generating interest of students in their career-formative years to enter the manufacturing sector, the Connecticut. Dream It. Do It. program will enable Connecticut's manufacturers to attract the skilled talent they need to grow and succeed in today's global market.

Thank you.

Michael G. Clute