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March 10, 2014

Sen. Fonfara, Rep. Widlitz, Sen. Frantz, Rep. Williams, Sen. LeBeau, Rep. Perone, Rep. Lavielle and members of the Finance and Commerce Committees,

On behalf of the thousands of Buildings Trades members in the state of Connecticut, I stand in support of H.B. 5465.

This bill, if passed, will not only ensure that Pratt & Whitney keep the highly skilled workers who build our military's aircraft engines in Connecticut, but will also give them an opportunity to employ new generations of workers that will follow in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents - who themselves have benefited from long, successful careers as part of the United Technologies family.

This legislation creates endless opportunities, including for small businesses throughout Connecticut that have been producing products for UTC. These companies will continue to grow and hire new generations of skilled workers.

The new and innovative technologies that our state universities and technical schools are training our students in ultimately lead to family sustaining, middle class jobs that keep them here in Connecticut post-graduation.

The facilities that will be built to house these workers will give the Building Trades men and women of Connecticut an opportunity to get back on the job. Our members have seen some of the toughest economic times in the Trades' history. Just months ago, some trades were grappling with unemployment rates as high as 50%. But because of this legislature's investments in Jackson labs and the UCONN towers at the medical center in Farmington, we have started to recover. The opportunity to be a part of Pratt & Whitney's expansion, along with The University of Connecticut's next generation project, could finally stabilize the Building Trades, and bring our unemployment numbers down to pre-recession levels we haven't experienced in over a decade. Further, this investment will give our returning veterans more opportunities to enter a construction career through our Helmets to Hardhats program, and give them direct entry into our training programs.

I started my own career as a Building Trades Sheet Metal Worker in 1979 after completing my apprenticeship program working for a company called Guarantee Service. Guarantee Service had a contract to perform small repair projects throughout the state's United Technologies facilities. Now we may have an opportunity to pass down Guarantee Service's torch to other contracting companies, and to help more apprentices get the on-the-job training they need at an institution so intrinsically connected to this state. And we cannot forget how many of our skilled machinists this opportunity could benefit as well.

I applaud your committees, and the entire legislature, for having taken the necessary steps over the past couple years to get the ball rolling on creating job opportunities through economic development initiatives. And now we can continue to keep it moving by passing this important legislation for the State of Connecticut, and its proud history that will continue with the United Technologies Corporation.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

David A. Roche
President, Connecticut State Building and Construction Trades Council



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