

Kristin Kopp-Vaughan Testimony for Joint Commerce & Finance Committee

Monday, March 10, 2014

HB5465 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CT AEROSPACE REINVESTMENT ACT

Good morning! My name is Dr. Kristin Vaughan and I am a combustion engineer at Pratt & Whitney.

During my 2 years at Pratt and Whitney I have been focused on advanced combustor R&D. I am part of a group of engineers that is developing an engine that produces a large amount of electricity with extremely low emission output. I have also started applying these skills to advanced flight engine technology to assure the cleanest, most innovative, and most dependable engines come from Pratt and Whitney in Connecticut.

To give you an idea of my background, I went to high school in Connecticut and I initially chose to leave the state for college because I believed there were more opportunities in STEM employment fields elsewhere.

After some research, I realized that not only did Connecticut have a healthy manufacturing base, but it also had a strong-hold in aerospace research and development, which was what I really wanted to do.

I transferred back in state and earned my undergraduate degree in physics at Central Connecticut State University and my PhD in mechanical engineering in combustion science at the University of Connecticut.

Soon after I started my PhD program at UCONN I started to work with Pratt & Whitney. As a student there is nothing like being able to talk, share and learn with people from a company that is so close. You learn so much more face to face than over the phone. The ideas and innovations seem to flow more freely when people are in a room together.

Before graduating, I was offered a position at Pratt & Whitney with the combustion engineers that helped guide me through my time at UCONN.

I was excited to work at Pratt & Whitney because of the relationships that I had formed. I really wanted to work with the people there and to tackle the tough combustion challenges that lay before us together.

When I heard the announcement I was inspired. This new facility will allow my colleagues and me to further expand on the complex R&D we already perform here.

This announcement demonstrates the value the State of Connecticut and UTC have in developing the next generation of engineers and state of the art research.

We want to keep bringing the best people to the best companies. New investment in facilities tells my generation that we are here, current, and innovative.

I am proud to say that I work for a company that is investing in their engineering talent and fosters the next generation of aerospace innovators. Should this decision be made it would only re-affirm my choice to live and work in Connecticut.