



Testimony of Lori J. Pelletier,
Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut AFLCIO
Before the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee
March 10, 2014

Senator Fonfara and Representative Widlitz and members of the committee
I am here to offer testimony on **HB 5465 AN ACT CONCERNING THE
CONNECTICUT AEROSPACE REINVESTMENT ACT.**

As a member of the Machinists union for nearly 30 years, I have witnessed many highs and lows in the Aerospace world. When I was first hired at Pratt&Whitney in the mid 1980's there were well over 10,000 blue collar jobs and growing. Over the next decade those jobs shrunk by 50% and today they are hovering around 2500 which is less than 25% of the total when I got hired.

UTC has done very well for itself over the past thirty years. Former chairman of the board George David earned over a million dollars a week during his tenure. Current CEO Louis Chenevert doesn't need to cut coupons either. So this is the catch 22 we find ourselves in. Do we support legislation which rewards bad behavior because we are so desperate for good paying jobs and ignore the past practice of UTC leaders? Or do we say this is a new day when UTC finally realizes it needs Connecticut and all we have to offer. And by offer not only do I mean the financial incentives but more importantly the skilled work force.

UTC will be investing in a number of new facilities and we have the most highly skilled, financially competitive building trades sector in the country. The bill you passed last year for "Next Generation" at UCONN will provide a pipeline for graduates to find exciting work right here in the nutmeg state which will be welcome news to the communities these young professionals chose to reside in.

The investment dollars spent by UTC to upgrade manufacturing as well as assembly and test facilities in East Hartford, Middletown and Windsor Locks will allow for state of the art process and provide those workers to pass their knowledge and skill onto the next generation of machinists.

The Connecticut AFLCIO stands ready to support this legislation, because we believe it will force UTC to put down some solid long term roots in our community which was lacking in previous agreements, and in return our communities will continue to provide UTC with the world class employees it has come accustomed to employ.

We do however want to highlight the need for specific commitments in the number of workers in UTC's bargaining units. We need to stop the death by a thousand cuts experienced over the last few decades and keep a solid level of bargaining unit employees right here for years to come.

We also want to highlight the need for investment in our two Aircraft Maintenance programs within our CT Technical High-school System. These programs are in desperate need of upgrades in technology and equipment. We wouldn't expect auto mechanics to learn on a '67 Chevy why would we expect our aircraft mechanics to learn on aviation from the 1960's.

Thank you to this committee and the Governor for the work done to secure good paying aerospace jobs for the next generation of workers and their families, and for investing in Connecticut's future!

Lori J. Pelletier

Executive Secretary-Treasurer