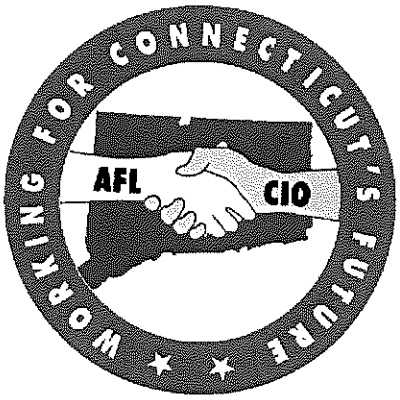

Testimony of the Connecticut AFL-CIO

Before the General Law Committee

March 11th, 2014

Senator Doyle, Representative Baram and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee,

We submit this testimony on behalf of the 900 affiliated local unions who represent 200,000 working men and women from every city and town in our great state in opposition to :

S.B. No. 268 An Act Concerning Apprentice Ratios

An apprentice in construction trades is an entry level employee. Most construction trade affiliates of the Connecticut AFL-CIO have multi-year apprenticeships in order for the apprentice to hone their skills. Upon completion of testing and required on the job training, these apprentices become journeypersons. Regardless of the vocation one chooses, apprenticeship is more than just "learning the craft". Apprenticeship teaches someone how to go about working in a safe manner and not harming themselves or others in the process. Learning a skill from a journeyperson the proper and professional manner of their craft is to be learned at the side of the journeyperson, not off to the side. Proponents of this bill claim there is a large demand for a person to become an apprentice. The proponents are excluding that there is also an availability of journeypersons that are unemployed seeking the same opportunity. The difference is cost. A journeypersons qualification is the equivalent to having a college degree. An apprentice is working towards getting that degree but is no expert until requirements have been met. Therefore they are unqualified to be by themselves producing work or have enough experience to keep them working in a safe manner. That is why a 1 to 1 ratio is not only the correct ratio, it is the proper ratio.

We thank the committee for holding this hearing.

Respectfully Submitted,

Todd G. Berch

Field Director