

TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
MARCH 11, 2014

My name is Jennifer Herz and I am Assistant Counsel for the Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents approximately 10,000 businesses throughout Connecticut and the vast majority of these are small companies employing less than 50 people.

A top priority for Connecticut's business community is preparing the talent pipeline for the 21st century. A number of bills on today's agenda relate to this goal and CBIA offers our comments in support of developing the next generation of talent.

CBIA supports the concepts raised in **SB 370 An Act Expanding the Tax Credit for Apprenticeship Training Programs**. Apprenticeship programs are effective tools for employers and students planning to enter the workforce where both sides of the equation have the opportunity to experience what the other has to offer. In the case of students an apprenticeship gives them the hands on training to make their classes more relevant and can help them better understand what a typical work day will mean should they decide to continue in that career. And, employers benefit as well by getting to know potential job candidates well beyond the bounds of a typical interview.

Specifically, an issue with apprenticeship programs is that they are not extended to all pass-through entities such as S corps and currently the tax credits only apply to C corps. This is an especially important distinction for small and mid sized manufactures that are not typically organized as C corps. Expanding apprenticeship tax credits to all pass-through entities in Connecticut will make the programs more attractive to employers and therefore help drive a more prepare workforce ready to meet the existing needs of Connecticut's companies.

A similar concept will be heard before the Commerce Committee on Thursday – SB 420 An Act Extending the Manufacturing Apprenticeship and Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit for Pass-Through Entities.

In the same vein CBIA supports the concepts raised in **SB 400 An Act Concerning Connecticut's Manufacturing and Technology Workforce** because this bill will similarly encourage apprenticeship programs. Encouraging apprenticeship programs is a win-win for employers and students. Students benefit from an enhanced curriculum and employers benefit by supporting qualified programming.

Developing Connecticut's skilled workforce is key to continued innovation and growth of Connecticut's economy. Apprenticeship programs support the next generation of talent in Connecticut and will help keep Connecticut's workforce competitive in a global economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer CBIA's comments.