

**Bianca, Pam**

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**From:** Brandon Dufour <brandon@all-stardriver.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 10, 2014 3:04 PM  
**To:** LABTestimony  
**Cc:** Rep. Cafero, Lawrence  
**Subject:** Testimony on Unemployment Assessment

To Whom It May Concern:

I am unfortunately unable to attend the Public Hearing on the Unemployment Assessment taxes being charged to employers in Connecticut. Please accept this written submission of testimony on my behalf.

My name is Brandon Dufour. I am a partner with my family in 3 LLCs in Connecticut. Combined, we employ over 1,000 people in the state. In 2014 alone, the Unemployment Assessments have cost our companies over \$70,000. This is money that comes right off our bottom line, thereby restricting us from investing in additional growth or additional staff. Being a business owner isn't easy. We invest our time, our money and our reputation every single day, often with very little reward. The state and federal governments were designed to aid business owners, as we are the backbone of a capitalist democracy. However, the hits just keep coming. Paid sick time, increased minimum wage, unemployment assessments, and Affordable Care Act are all making it nearly impossible to be profitable. And the businesses I run have all been profitable for years. If a person with an idea and drive wanted to start a new business, I would quickly recommend they move before opening their doors in this business climate.

The entrepreneurial community needs our state government to support us, not to hurt us. We can partner with the State to help create new business opportunities and help improve everyone's bottom line. Instead, there is a consistent push and pull relationship between the State and my peer business owners. We are all unsatisfied with the work being done.

Respectfully, I ask you all to consider the effects that these assessments have on business owners. This is money that would be best spent on research, development and staff training that is instead being used to fund an inefficient unemployment system

One final story: My entry level workers make between \$30,000 and \$40,000 per year. I have openings all the time because of our fast growth. Yet, I cannot seem to fill these openings. We interview daily, and at least twice per week, have a job offer rejected by an applicant because they make more money on unemployment than they would going to work every day. So I ask you to look at this from my perspective. I have jobs available to be filled, I have capable people applying for them, these capable people are turning the jobs down to continue to collect unemployment, which stalls my business growth because I cannot fill positions, and in turn, I receive an assessment from the unemployment office quarterly to help pay for the unemployment that is stalling my growth. This is a cycle that we need to break out of, and it is up to you in Hartford to come up with a solution. I thank you for your time and consideration.

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