

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
MARCH 19, 2015**

My name is Jennifer Herz and I am Assistant Counsel for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA has been representing Connecticut's employers for 200 years and our goal is to foster a dynamic business climate. Our members include businesses from across the state of all sizes and industry types and we are proud to say the vast majority of our members are small companies employing less than 50 people.

**CBIA submits this testimony in support of SB 1098 AAC Teacher Certification Requirements for Shortage Areas, Interstate Agreements for Teacher Certification Reciprocity, Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention and Cultural Competency Instruction.**

CBIA supports this bill because it expands the pool of qualified teachers and administrators for Connecticut schools. The bill addresses interstate reciprocity agreements, the number of years out-of-state teachers must have previously taught to teach to Connecticut without additional testing and alternative certification routes for administrators. Additionally, CBIA supports addressing strategies to attract and recruit minority teachers and administrators as well as training in cultural competency.

**We also wish to comment on SB 1095 AAC Student Assessments.** While we certainly appreciate studying a given topic to better understand its impact we wanted to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of standardized tests to our system of accountability. Assessments objectively measure progress and growth in our schools and are critical to accountability.

**Finally, HB 7023 AAC Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes includes new definitions regarding student internships.** Student internships are a win-win for students and employers; providing students with valuable experience and employers the opportunity to expose the next generation of talent to their business. Section 10 of this bill includes very important changes such as limiting the liability of internship providers (line 336). CBIA supports this change because it is essential to encourage even more employers to participate in internship programs and liability can often be a hurdle to participation. However, the definition of "student intern" (line 333) raises concerns because of its limited applicability. The definition is currently drafted as follows: "student intern: means a student enrolled in an agricultural science and technology

education center participating in an internship offered or provided by an internship provider”. It is unclear why the definition is limited to these two types of education pathways. CBIA respectfully suggest the definition is broadened to provide internship opportunities to all students. This definition is also tied to “internship provider” (line 325) that may also limit internships to boards of education that operate agricultural science or technology education. The same comments would apply to that definition.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit CBIA’s comments and we look forward to the opportunity to work with the Committee.