

## **TESTIMONY – Appropriations Committee Public Hearing March 2, 2015**

Good Evening Members of the Appropriations Committee. It is an honor to speak before you today. My name is Catherine Cleare and I am owner of Catherine Cleare Interiors, LLC based in Greenwich, CT. I am here to testify on behalf of the Women's Business Development Council (WBDC) and ask you to reinstate the funding for this important organization.

As this committee already knows, small businesses and entrepreneurs are the backbone of America's economy, creating 65 percent or more of new jobs in our country each year. In fact, women owned small businesses are expected to create almost 60 percent of projected 18 million new jobs to be created by 2018.

### **YOUR PERSONAL WBDC STORY HERE**

**WBDC assisted Catherine Cleare Interiors, LLC in applying for a grant in the amount of \$10,000.00 which afforded us the opportunity to hire a full time employee plus hire outside consultants for training our staff.**

**WBDC has offered professional training programs such as reading financial statements and budgeting that have transformed the way that we operate our business.**

**DECD gave to Catherine Cleare Interiors, LLC a loan in the amount of \$63,000.00 which was used to hire a full time employee, upgrade office hardware and software programs, marketing campaign and training seminars for staff.**

Since its inception 18 years ago WBDC has provided small business training to over 12,000 clients from each of the 169 towns throughout the state. In the past 18 months, WBDC's loan packaging experts have seen more than 100 prospective Small Business Express (SBE) clients, and closed on nearly \$2M in SBE funds to women business owners. In 2014 WBDC helped its clients create more than 300 jobs and generate over \$32M in gross revenues.

I believe it is imperative to continue to fund WBDC's training and education programs for women entrepreneurs and provide them with the tools they need to help them create jobs, grow their businesses and succeed as tax payers in Connecticut.

This concludes my prepared statement. Thank you for your commitment to Connecticut's Small Businesses and for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today. I would be pleased to answer your questions.

**YOUR NAME AND CONTACT INFO HERE**

**Catherine Cleare Interiors, LLC**

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