



## State of Connecticut

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Testimony  
Commerce Committee

February 10, 2015

In Support of:

Proposed S.B. No. 619 AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR A STRATFORD CULTURAL ARTS CENTER. (CE)

Senator Hartley, Representative Perone, Senator Frantz, and Representative Camillo and members of the Commerce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. No 619 An Act Authorizing the Bonds of the State for a Stratford Cultural Arts Center.

Stratford is a historic hub for not only our state, but our entire nation.

Stratford's history is full of brave individuals and revolutionary minds. From the founding Reverend Adam Blakeman, to aviation pioneer Igor Sikorsky, to statesman William Samuel Johnson, Stratford has been home to many amazing people who have done some incredible things.

As the town just celebrated its 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it is also a time to honor that history and those people who made our town, and our nation, what it is today.

Establishing a Cultural Arts Center will, more specifically, enable us to honor Stratford's role in the birth of our nation by celebrating the contributions of William Samuel Johnson – a statesman who played a vital role in shaping our nation. William Samuel Johnson represented Connecticut at the Constitutional Convention and in the U.S. Senate. He also served as president of Columbia University.

Born in Stratford in 1721, William Samuel Johnson was educated at Yale, held a commission in the Connecticut colonial militia for over 20 years, held a position in the lower house of the Connecticut Legislature (1761 and 1765) and in the upper house (1766 and 1771–75), and was a member of the colony's Supreme Court (1772–74).

SB 619 will enable Stratford to create a cultural arts center to unite many historic properties including the Booth Property, Perry House, William Samuel Johnson House, Judson House and other significant venues. By establishing this cultural hub, Stratford can better preserve the legacy of our history and attract visitors who wish to learn about the birth of our nation and the development of the great state of Connecticut.

Thank you for raising this bill and for the opportunity to testify today.