CONNECTICUT BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
MARCH 12, 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 has significant concerns with HB 6845 An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Higher Education.

The ability to produce a highly educated workforce impacts every employer in Connecticut; human capital is at the core of our ability to compete in the global economy. Key among Connecticut's advantages relative to other states is our highly educated/skilled workforce. But, according to Connecticut's Strategic Plan for Higher Education recently adopted by the Legislative Planning Commission for Higher Education, we are not prepared to meet the skilled workforce needs of the future**.**

The report, written in consultation with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)[1], notes that in 2012, 47.5% of Connecticut's population had an Associate's Degree or higher. However, projections by Georgetown University's Center on Education in the Workforce indicate that by 2025 Connecticut's economy will require a workforce in which 70% of residents have education beyond high school.[2]

This translates into a need to produce ***an additional 3,300*** more degrees and certificates each year than we currently do today. A detailed analysis presented in the report shows that today, Connecticut's private colleges and universities are responsible for producing almost ***50%*** of all certificates and degrees granted in the state. The report emphasizes that the capacities of the higher education sectors, ***including the independent sector***, must be harnessed if state goals are to be reached.

[1] http://www.nchems.org/
[2] https://cew.georgetown.edu/report/help-wanted/

Further, the education attainment gap between whites and minorities is greater in Connecticut than in almost all other states in the country.[3] Private colleges and universities graduate minority students in 4-years at a significantly higher rate than their public counterparts[4]. And, 2,458 minority students attending these institutions received a Governor's Scholarship grant in 2013-2014 – 44% of all grant recipients at private colleges. To help close the attainment gap, the state needs to continue to invest in the Governor's Scholarship Program for needy students to attend Connecticut's private colleges.

If we are to meet the needs of Connecticut's employers with the highly educated workforce needed to innovate and grow, then our private colleges and universities must continue to play a major role in meeting that demand. Therefore, we need to sustain the Governor's Scholarship Program for needy, Connecticut resident students of private institutions of higher learning.

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

[3] http://www.theccic.org/Customer-Content/WWW/CMS/files/Graph_of_the_Week_PDFs/Attainment_Gap_by_state_2010_-_2012.pdf
[4] http://www.theccic.org/Customer-Content/WWW/CMS/files/Graph_of_the_Week_PDFs/Minority_Graduation_Rate_12-13.pdf