

Dear Judiciary Committee:

To the esteemed Sen. Eric Coleman and Rep. William Tong

Hi my name is Jeff Bishop with the Center For Sustainable Business Growth a program of the Bridgeport Regional Business Council. We are a Public Private Partnership that is involved in economic development here in the Greater Bridgeport area; specifically business recruitment and business retention. I can tell you first hand the detrimental effect that corruption committed by public officials has on economic development and the ability to attract businesses into your region.

I started my economic development career as Vice President of Recruitment for the Bridgeport Economic Resources Center back in 1998. The Bridgeport Economic Resource Center was created as a public private partnership to help take the economic development function out of the reach of elected officials; a trend that was developing throughout the country. In most cases public officials were getting themselves in hot water due to economic development deals or arrangements they would insert themselves in. It was no different in Bridgeport. The Mayor of our city was under indictment for numerous offences which he subsequently was found guilty of and went to jail. I was hired because I had been a CEO of a company in Stamford and could relate to senior executives and understand their needs and requirements. I can tell you at that point in time you could not encourage anyone to consider moving their company into Bridgeport. It has literally taken over 15 years for our area and city to shake off the reputation of being corrupt of having the "pay to play" label.

Part of my responsibility has been to reach out to and call on National Site Selection Consultants that are located in the New York City area. One of the reoccurring themes is that Connecticut is last on their list for relocation considerations for large corporate users. They often refer to the elected officials that have included our Governor and Mayor of our city for all being convicted of corruption and going to jail. The expression "Corrupticut" is very much alive and well in the relocation site selection consultant community. Connecticut also has other hurdles to jump over having a high cost of doing business and the perceived onerous business regulation, however, the Corrupticut label is the final nail in the coffin when it comes to business recruitment.

I would urge you to consider this bill to send a message to not only public officials but also the business and consulting community that Connecticut is open for business and smart place to move your business to.

Thank you.