

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



JOE ARESIMOWICZ
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER

Senator Hartley, Representative Perone, and Members of the Commerce Committee. I am Representative Joe Aresimowicz of the 30th District serving Berlin and Southington. I offer this testimony in support of HB 5426: AN ACT MANDATING THE CREATION OF THE CONNECTICUT-MADE DESIGNATION.

The statute that this bill amends, Section 32-6m, was passed as part of the special session on the budget in June 2012. The concept originated in this committee and had the support then of every committee member. However, due to budget constraints it has yet to actually be implemented. My hope is that, by raising this bill, we can start a discussion about how to make a "Connecticut-Made" designation a reality.

When we passed the original language, our goal was to draw attention to the manufacturers and artisans in Connecticut that are building and producing products that we use every day in our homes and offices, and to encourage residents to shop local. I think about what we use every day – chairs, bookcases, tables, for example – all of which are made by companies in Connecticut. We should showcase that. We should make it easier for consumers to find these companies and for companies to be proud that they are here in our state.

We have all seen the "CT Grown" label in our supermarkets and farmers markets reminding us to purchase produce that comes from local farms. The program, which was launched in 1986, has made consumers more aware of our large agricultural industry. We should do the same for our manufacturers and artisans.

We have had over the past several months a lot of negativity about our economic climate. But there are local businesses that are doing good work and growing our economy every day. In fact, manufacturing accounts for \$25 billion (almost 11.4%) of Connecticut's gross state domestic product, according to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis. A "CT Made" label on products will help instill a sense of pride in this large segment of our economy.

Several other states already have similar programs. A 2008 research report from OLR found that at least nine states market and promote state-made products. A number of other states have either for-profit or non-profit programs that market state-made goods. We should find a way to make this program work for Connecticut. I hope this bill will start that conversation.

Thank you for your consideration.