



**Public Hearing Testimony of
Scott D. Jackson, Commissioner
Department of Labor
Commerce Committee
March 10, 2016**

Good Afternoon Senator Hartley, Representative Perone, Senator Frantz, Representative Camillo and members of the Commerce Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with testimony regarding **Senate Bill No. 396, AAC a Fast Track for Apprenticeships**. My name is Scott Jackson and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Labor.

This bill proposes to permit DOL to accept work experience performed by an individual prior to registration as an apprentice, thereby reducing the number of hours needed towards the completion of an apprenticeship.

Although DOL is in support of initiatives that will strengthen the apprenticeship program, I must oppose this proposed bill as drafted. Relying on representations concerning work experience, made by an individual applying for an apprenticeship, puts DOL in a precarious position. An individual who is not accurate in his or her representation of work experience poses a safety concern. A sponsor, relying on DOL's representation that an individual should be credited hours towards an apprenticeship, may give that apprentice work that is actually beyond his or her capabilities, thus, putting the apprentice, co-workers and the public in danger.

Further, the work performed by an individual that could potentially translate into hours performed towards an apprenticeship, should actually have been performed by an apprentice and not an unregistered individual. For example, in a licensed trade, if an individual reports that he or she has work experience comparable to 500 hours in that trade, that work should only be performed by an apprentice. DOL would have no confirmation that such past work experience was actually performed.

There are circumstances in which DOL does have access to a reliable document trail that allows for the fast-tracking of apprenticeships. DOL readily accepts work experience of a member of the military. Those hours are based on military work that has been translated into appropriate apprentice hours. Also, DOL does accept credit towards an apprenticeship in Connecticut if it is work that had been performed pursuant to a bona fide program run by another state or USDOL. In that case, the apprentice has completed work with the oversight of a state or USDOL.

DOL always seeks ways to improve our system of apprenticeship and looks forward to working with the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.