

Testimony regarding SB 1

March 21, 2016

Good afternoon members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. My name is Kris Lorch and I am the President of Alloy Engineering Company a manufacturer in Bridgeport.

This bill has received a generous amount of your time and thought and I am pleased to see that you are interested not only in manufacturing but in building technology campuses in urban areas of our state.

I believe this bill should be rolled into the existing Connecticut Innovations platform as our state does not require another quasi-public agency. This bill is changing the 581 statute which is currently for the CT Innovations agency therefore it makes sense to add your requirements to their agency. In our current fiscal crisis I am sure your intent was not to increase the state financial burden. Outlined are 25 million to ImpaCT, 60 million to Startup CT, 5 million to DOE. Although these funds might be supported by bonding I believe the state is going to reach its maximum bonding shortly.

It is clear in some of the language that you will be re-directing existing funds from other programs such as the marketing dollars from tourism and dollars from the Manufacturing Innovation Fund. The MIF has a committee that is currently charged with the distribution of their 20 million dollars and it should not be taken from them by this legislative body and re-directed without their approval/consent.

In section 16 of this bill you are re-directing funds from the MIF to CCAT and to the Dream it Do it program. I began my involvement with the Dream it Do it program when it was initially launched in December of 2010. The groups involved at the apex were CCAT, CBIA and NAM. There were monthly meetings from January 2011 through mid-year 2012 of approximately four groups of business leaders developing the program, advertising, finance, and procuring facilities for the groups of students and the public to have a realistic view of manufacturing. The program has not been the same since 2012, little if any planning has been done that included the manufacturing membership organizations or individual manufacturers and therefore many businesses have chosen not to support the activity realizing that it had become a cash cow for CCAT and not providing support to the youth and public it was intended to serve. I believe that any and all funds which you have allocated for the Dream it Do it program should be withdrawn until you have had an opportunity to review the worth of the program, its outcomes and the matrix on how many students have been supported by the program. You should also do your due diligence regarding how these funds are going to be spent.

Thank you for allowing me to speak with you regarding this bill and please know that I am not supporting the passage of this bill without the necessary changes to reduce spending Connecticut revenues.