Dear Members of the Connecticut General Assembly, HB 5367

Happy New Year.

Connecticut begins 2016 having finally regained all of the private sector jobs lost in the Great Recession of 2008. Although our pace of recovery lagged the nation and neighboring states, we—and the tens of thousands of families in the workforce we represent—are committed to sustaining these job gains and building upon them. In return, we ask that you refrain from making our commitment more difficult by creating new or expanding existing labor mandates.

Gov. Malloy, in signing the budget adjustments produced in last month's special legislative session, said it best when he remarked, "We no doubt have more to do in the General Assembly session ahead, but this is a positive step to improve the state's business climate and deliver long-term predictability that will allow our families and businesses to thrive."

Businesses of all sizes looking to retain or grow jobs in Connecticut, above all else, need stability and predictability to build a secure workforce. They look not only at whether or not the state's fiscal house is in order, but also at lawmakers' attitudes on imposing untried, unnecessary, inflexible, one-size-fits all labor mandates.

Like you, we are tired of the negative perception of Connecticut's business climate. We are committed to partnering with you to make Connecticut more competitive. However, the reality is that the labor mandates enacted in recent years have added to the already high cost of sustaining Connecticut jobs, and they have slowed our recovery. Companies that have chosen to exit the state have directly cited these mandates as contributing factors.

Your effort in recent months to reduce state spending was an important first step, but the journey to steadily securing Connecticut's workforce gains is a long one—and we cannot afford any steps backward. It is critical to Connecticut's businesses that the perpetual threat of new and expanded labor mandates ends now.

The next step in the journey requires more action. We urge you do the following in the 2016 session:

1. Reject efforts to establish a state-sponsored retirement plan for the private sector that will directly compete with Connecticut's vital financial services industry and also force businesses to enroll employees in, or incur the payroll costs of facilitating contributions to, any such plan.
2. Reject creating a costly and unsustainable new paid family and medical leave program or expanding existing leave requirements.
3. Reject efforts to impose penalty taxes on employers who create job opportunities for unskilled and entry-level employees simply because some of those opportunities start at less than $15 per hour.
4. Reject the addition or expansion of any other one-size-fits-all employee leave or scheduling mandates.
5. Protect the unemployment compensation trust fund for future employees by adopting the same unemployment benefit reforms that our neighboring states are successfully using.

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Connecticut's economy has newfound traction. It takes courage and bold action to set a new course and stay on it. If you do your part to provide job creators with relief from current and newly proposed costly labor mandates, we can work together to expand and create more jobs and opportunities right here, where they belong.

Respectfully,

Associated General Contractors of Connecticut
Avon Chamber of Commerce
Bethel Chamber of Commerce
Bridgeport Regional Business Council
Builders & Remodelers Association of Eastern Connecticut
Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut
Connecticut Asphalt & Aggregate Producers Association
Connecticut Association of Plumbing, Heating & Cooling Contractors
Connecticut Bankers Association
Connecticut Bioscience Growth Council
Connecticut Bus Association
Connecticut Business & Industry Association
Connecticut Associated Builders & Contractors
Connecticut Association of Community Pharmacies
Connecticut Child Care Association
Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners
Connecticut Construction Industries Association
Connecticut Environmental & Utilities Contractors Association
Connecticut Farm Bureau Association
Connecticut Food Association
Connecticut Heating & Cooling Contractors Association
Connecticut Homemaker & Companion Association
Connecticut Lodging Association
Connecticut Messenger Courier Association
Connecticut Ready Mixed Concrete Association
Connecticut Restaurant Association
Connecticut Retail Merchants Association
Connecticut River Valley Chamber of Commerce
Connecticut Road Builders Association
Connecticut School Transportation Association
Connecticut Society of Certified Public Accountants
Connecticut Tooling & Machining Association
Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association
Connecticut Vineyard & Winery Association
Employers Association of the NorthEast
Farmington Chamber of Commerce
Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce
Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
Greater New Britain Chamber of Commerce
Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce
Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce
Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce
Hamden Regional Chamber of Commerce
Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut
Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Central Connecticut
Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Fairfield County
Home Builders Association of Northwest Connecticut
Home Care Association of America, Connecticut Chapter
Independent Insurance Agents of Connecticut, Inc.
Insurance Association of Connecticut
International Franchise Association
Lumber Dealers Association of Connecticut
Madison Chamber of Commerce
Manufacturers Alliance of Connecticut, a division of the Employers Association of the NorthEast
MetroHartford Alliance
Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce
Midstate Chamber of Commerce
Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce
Motor Transport Association of Connecticut
National Federation of Independent Business
New England Convenience Store & Energy Marketers Association
New England Spring & Metal Stamping Association
New Haven Manufacturers Association
Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce
Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce
Old Saybook Chamber of Commerce
Orange Chamber of Commerce
Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce
Smaller Manufacturers Association of Connecticut
Stamford Chamber of Commerce
Tolland County Chamber of Commerce
Utility Contractors Association of Connecticut
Waterbury Regional Chamber of Commerce
Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce