

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
AT THE LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
MARCH 7, 2016**

I am Dr. Christine Benz and I am responsible for managing the Training Center at TRUMPF Inc. in Farmington. In this role, I am responsible for providing TRUMPF customers with the knowledge they need to operate high- technology equipment successfully as well as for the continuous development of TRUMPF employees.

TRUMPF is the largest manufacturer of fabricating equipment and industrial lasers in North America. We offer our customers innovative, high-quality products and solutions in the areas of sheet metal processing and laser-based production processes.

**I submit this testimony in support of SB 383 An Act Concerning the Technical High School System.**

This bill supports workforce development in the following way:

- Establishes an evening pilot program for incumbent workers at a technical high school

Connecticut's manufacturers play a vital role in our economy: there are nearly 4,500 manufacturing firms that employ 10% of all nonfarm jobs in the state.<sup>1</sup> But, manufacturers continue to face a significant challenge regarding workforce development. The 2014 Survey of Connecticut's Manufacturing Needs estimated 9,300 manufacturing job openings at the end of last year.<sup>2</sup> The need for highly skilled workers is significant and immediate.

This bill is a step in the right direction to ensure that Connecticut's manufacturers have the skilled workforce they need to continue to innovate and grow here in Connecticut.

Establishing an evening pilot program at a technical high school is an efficient way to utilize existing resources to train existing employees so they can move up the career ladder.

We at TRUMPF struggle to hire employees with the skill set we are looking for as a high-technology firm and need innovative ideas to develop our workforce.

I urge your support of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to share my comments on SB 383.

Dr. Christine Benz

TRUMPF Inc.

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<sup>1</sup> 2014 Survey of Connecticut Manufacturing Workforce Needs:

<http://www.cbia.com/resources/economy/reports-surveys/2014-survey-of-connecticut-manufacturing-workforce-needs/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www5.cbia.com/newsroom/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/MFG-Workforce\\_14.pdf?cldee=YnVkZGpAY2JpYS5jb20%3d&utm\\_source=ClickDimensions&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=CD\\_NEWSROOM](http://www5.cbia.com/newsroom/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/MFG-Workforce_14.pdf?cldee=YnVkZGpAY2JpYS5jb20%3d&utm_source=ClickDimensions&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=CD_NEWSROOM) (See page 4)