



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

My name is Jennifer Herz and I am Assistant Counsel for the Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA has been representing Connecticut's employers for 200 years and today is proud to say the vast majority of our members are small companies employing less than 50 people.

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

This bill supports workforce development in two important ways:

- Streamlines the approval process for hiring new teachers at technical high schools
- 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.¹ But, manufacturers continue to face a significant challenge regarding workforce development. The 2014 Survey of Connecticut's Manufacturing Needs (Manufacturing Survey) estimated 9,300 manufacturing job openings at the end of last year.² 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.

The 2015 Survey of Connecticut Businesses, by CBIA and BlumShapiro, told us that employers see investment in technical education is one of the best ways to address their workforce concerns.³ 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. Additionally, streamlining the process to hire teachers at the technical high schools will ensure the students are learning from experienced professionals.

Many manufacturers in Connecticut are facing what some are calling a "grey cliff" with many of their existing employees planning to retire in the next few years.⁴ According to the Manufacturing Survey, 66% of manufacturers plan to address retirements by training existing workers. This bill will also support that plan to engage existing employees to move up the career ladder.

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

¹ 2014 Survey of Connecticut Manufacturing Workforce Needs:

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

² [http://www5.cbia.com/newsroom/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/MFG-](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)

[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)

³ <http://www.cbia.com/resources/economy/reports-surveys/2015-survey-of-connecticut-businesses/>

⁴ <http://www.cbia.com/resources/economy/reports-surveys/2015-survey-of-connecticut-businesses/>