



March 22, 2016

Testimony in Support of 5636

Dear Representative Berger, Senator Fonfara and members of the Finance Committee

Connecticut Association of Smaller Manufacturers (CASM), is comprised of the Smaller Manufacturers Association of Waterbury (SMA), the New Haven Manufacturers Association (NHMA), Manufacturers Education and Training Alliance (METAL) of Bridgeport and the New England Spring & Metal stamping Association and collectively represents over 400 companies with more than ten percent of the employees in the state's manufacturing sector. We applaud the committee for bringing forward HB 5636 section 5, this section would expand the apprenticeship tax credit program to a variety of companies rather than Corporations, which was previously the only business entity that could claim the credit.

Sirois Tool Company currently has two Apprentice Toolmakers, both Graduates of the Manufacturing Technology department at Vinal Tech. (We also have another Graduate of that program who has recently completed his Apprenticeship.) We are receiving Wage Subsidy Reimbursement from CT DOL under the Manufacturing Innovation Fund Apprenticeship Program. This program is certainly a help and something that we believe should be continued. Expanding the Manufacturing Apprenticeship Tax Credit would be very helpful. Unfortunately, because Sirois is a Subchapter S corporation they are not eligible for this Tax Credit, as currently written. I don't know how many subchapter C corporations are taking advantage of this Tax Credit but I would guess that smaller manufacturers like us, who tend to be subchapter S corporations, could really use this along with the generally bigger subchapter C corporations. It would be extremely beneficial for this program to be expanded as proposed.

Another user of Connecticut's State Sponsored Apprenticeship Program is Bridgeport Fittings. Bridgeport Fittings is located in Stratford, CT and we are a family owned electrical business that believes in supporting Bill 5636. We currently have three apprenticeship program (two enrolled in the Tool and Die Journeyman and one is enrolled as an electrician apprenticeship). We face an aging workforce problem like so many fellow manufacturers. We have an average age of 57 in our 205 employee company. The investment into these workers is important to build our workforce in the future. With 12 tool and mold makers in our Tool Room, it is critical that we train our interns and young workers to fill the open skilled positions, and the ones open in the near future. We are not unlike so many other precision and advanced manufacturers across the state needing to build a future workforce. The State's Apprenticeship program has proven to work at Bridgeport Fittings so it makes sense to nurture it for all Subchapter S corporate fellow manufacturing businesses across the state. We can't just educate workers in schools they need this important program funded to help get the workers onto the shop floors.

Sent from my iPad