

Commerce Committee
Public Hearing – February 23, 2017



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Testimony in support of HB 5584
An Act Concerning the Creation of a Small Business Hotline

Dear Co-Chairs Senators Hartley and Frantz, Representative Simmons; Ranking Member Representative Yaccarino; and members of the Commerce Committee.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue. My name is Brett Broesder, and I'm a co-founder and vice president at the Campaign for Tomorrow's Jobs, which is a new non-profit advocacy organization that supports growing Connecticut's economy for present and future generations. We engage policymakers, business leaders, advocates, entrepreneurs, and residents in seeking out ways to ensure Connecticut's wins the competition for tomorrow's jobs.

Small firms have accounted for 60 percent of net new jobs since the recession, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration. That number is below pre-recession levels while, too often, complicated regulations, red tape, and difficult bureaucratic processes discourage talented entrepreneurs from starting a business or expanding their workforce – not just in Connecticut, but nationwide.

A recently released Thumbtack Small Business Friendliness Survey, reaching more than 12,000 entrepreneurs across the country who in turn graded state and local policies that affect small businesses, found that governments must make regulations straightforward and easy to follow. Otherwise, convoluted regulations – especially those surrounding licensing, taxes, and employment – are the biggest impediments to starting, growing, and sustaining a business, according to the survey.

Another finding in Thumbtack's Survey is that when it comes to business friendliness, Connecticut performed poorly, echoing the results of a recent CNBC report that ranked our state as one of the least business-friendly states in the country.

That said, our state has taken significant steps to offer small businesses and entrepreneurs the tools they need to grow, thrive, and succeed right here in our great state. However, as someone who recently went through the process of setting up a nonprofit, the hoops that one needs to jump through – going from one agency to the next until you can get someone on the phone, until you're invariably talking to a very nice person who knows the system in their respective agency, yet they need to kick you to another – can be frustrating, at best.

The result of this vicious cycle is that many small businesses and entrepreneurs end up incurring one of three costs: either increase your already significant number of legal fees, hire someone on a temporary

basis who can invest the days upon days it can take to complete the process, or do it yourself while putting all of the other actions that are necessary to run your business day-to-day on hold.

There's a simple solution to this problem: creating a small business hotline that serves as a one-stop-shop for entrepreneurs and small businesses to be guided through these processes.

That's why this bill, featuring a relatively simple solution to a significant problem, is so powerful. If passed and signed into law, it has the potential to make our state more business friendly. I urge members of the committee to join me in supporting this important bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Brett Broesder
Campaign for Tomorrow's Jobs
Co-Founder and Vice President