



CONNECTICUT

**TESTIMONY OF
ANDY MARKOWSKI, STATE DIRECTOR
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS (NFIB)
SUPPORTING
HB-5584, AAC THE CREATION OF A SMALL BUSINESS HOTLINE
BEFORE THE
COMMERCE COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 23, 2017**

A non-profit, non-partisan organization founded in 1943, NFIB is Connecticut's and the nation's leading small-business association. In Connecticut, NFIB represents thousands of members and their employees. NFIB membership is scattered across the state and ranges from sophisticated high technology enterprises to "Main Street" small businesses to single-person "Mom & Pop" shops that operate in traditional ways. NFIB's mission is "To promote and protect the right of its members to own, operate, and grow their businesses." On behalf of those small- and independent- job-providers in Connecticut, NFIB/Connecticut offers the following comments:

NFIB/Connecticut supports HB-5584. This pro-small business bill will help provide small business owners (and perspective small business owners) with a direct telephone line to state information and resources. A small business owners' most valuable resource is often their time, and anything that the state of Connecticut can do to help provide small business owners with advice, information and resources in a one-stop timely manner will be both beneficial and much appreciated by the small business community. While similar hotlines exist in other states, they are often managed/run through the local or regional Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). This proposal before the Committee today, which has the state directly establish the hotline through DECD, is an improvement on these other models. States like Ohio, for example, have similar state direct business assistance hotlines.

In addition to supporting the bill as currently drafted, NFIB/CT would offer three minor suggestions to perhaps help refine and improve upon the proposed hotline for Connecticut. First and foremost, either through legislation or in the implementation process, ensure that navigating the hotline is user friendly and provides valuable, relevant, and most-commonly requested small business resources/information. Second, while some electronic automation of telephone recording and prompts may admittedly be necessary, ensure that the small business owner calling in, if desired, can quickly and easily reach a live person, knowledgeable about the operations and resources of the hotline. Finally, consider complimenting the hotline with a similar web presence.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your consideration of NFIB's support for this important proposal from Speaker Aresimowicz and Majority Leader Ritter. For any questions or additional information, contact Andy Markowski, NFIB/Connecticut State Director, at 860-248-NFIB.