



**Testimony of
Louise DiCocco
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Connecticut Business & Industry Association
Before the
Judiciary Committee**

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Good Afternoon. My name is Louise DiCocco and I am Counsel for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents thousands of businesses in the state of Connecticut ranging from one-person businesses to large corporations. The majority of our members have fewer than 25 employees.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on, and urge **SUPPORT** of *SB 981 AN ACT CONCERNING STRATEGIC LITIGATION AGAINST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND A SPECIAL MOTION TO DISMISS*. SB 981 establishes a special motion to dismiss in civil proceedings involving a strategic lawsuit against public participation, and protects the First Amendment rights of not only citizens, but businesses, against strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP). SLAPPS' are baseless lawsuits seeking to silence those exercising their First Amendment rights.

SB 981 will protect citizens and businesses from being frivolously sued. In addition, this bill will provide the means for those sued for exercising this right to resolve lawsuits efficiently, and in a timely manner so defendants do not have to waste their time and resources on litigation and attorneys' fees defending their first amendment rights. This legislation strikes the right balance for all parties.

Thirty states have enacted anti-SLAPP legislation. SB 981 will enable Connecticut to join other states, and is a step forward to ensuring businesses have the right to express opinions guaranteed by the first amendment. For these reasons, we urge support for this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.