



**Testimony Before the  
Higher Education Committee  
March 9, 2017**

My name is Christine Benz and I am responsible for managing the Training Center at TRUMPF Inc. in Farmington, CT. In this role, I am responsible for providing TRUMPF customers with the knowledge they need to operate high- technology equipment successfully as well as for the continuous development of the over 700 TRUMPF employees.

TRUMPF Inc. is the largest manufacturer of fabricating equipment and industrial lasers in North America. We offer our customers innovative, high-quality products and solutions in the areas of sheet metal processing and laser-based production processes.

**This testimony is to provide information to the committee about TRUMPF Inc.'s apprenticeship program in response to SB 837 An Act Concerning Apprenticeship Opportunities for High Growth, High Demand Jobs.**

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.<sup>1</sup> But, manufacturers continue to face a significant challenge regarding workforce development. The 2014 Survey of Connecticut's Manufacturing Needs estimated 9,300 manufacturing job openings.<sup>2</sup> The need for highly skilled workers is significant and immediate.

We at TRUMPF struggle to hire employees with the skill set we are looking for as a high-technology firm and we need innovative ideas to develop our workforce. TRUMPF Inc. is a sponsor of registered apprenticeship training since 2012. Graduates of our apprenticeship program have become highly valued members of our workforce.

Boosting apprenticeship training is a crucial step in ensuring that Connecticut's manufacturers have the skilled workforce they need to continue to innovate and to grow here in Connecticut. To do that, we need public-private partnerships that raise awareness of and interest in apprenticeship training among students. Measures need to be identified and

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<sup>1</sup> 2014 Survey of Connecticut Manufacturing Workforce Needs:  
<http://www.cbia.com/resources/economy/reports-surveys/2014-survey-of-connecticut-manufacturing-workforce-needs/>

<sup>2</sup> [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](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)

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implemented that lessen the burden of apprenticeship program development, administration, and cost among firms. Such measures have been implemented successfully in i. e. Michigan (MAT<sup>2</sup> program), North Carolina (NCTAP), and other states.

I urge you continue to learn more about apprenticeship models and how successful models support employers.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my comments.

Best regards,

Dr. Christine Benz

TRUMPF Inc.