



February 5, 2019

Testimony concerning the following bills:

H.B. No. 5001 AN ACT ENSURING THAT STUDENTS IN THIS STATE RECEIVE HIGH-QUALITY SKILLS TRAINING

H.B. No. 5828 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A GREEN JOBS CAREER LADDER

*S.B. No. 799 AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

*H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING MANUFACTURING AND TECHNOLOGY

Submitted by: David Downes, Program Manager for CAACE, the Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education, *the statewide professional organization representing providers of mandated adult education.*

Representative Haddad, Senator Haskell and members of the Committee:

The bills cited above all involve an opportunity to improve the career pathways from targeted education and training to sustaining occupations in high-demand job sectors. There is a temptation in planning career pathways to just think that if the proper training is set up, a program will turn out all the workers that are needed. As we've seen in this time of shrinking unemployment figures, however, recruitment of learners ready for education and training is becoming more difficult, not just in terms of numbers, but also in terms of the “wrap around services” needed to insure that participants achieve. My brief points here are to make clear what is needed for any of these bills to lead to succeed:

Counseling - Counselors are needed to assess the goals of potential learners and to help direct them toward suitable education and training goals. Counselors are also key in determining and arranging for the other services – transportation, childcare, etc. – are needed to support success.

Career Pathways – All the necessary steps toward an ultimate occupational goal need to be lined up, such as nationally recognized, “stackable” certificates and credentials allowing for short and longer-term time commitments and for gradual increases in job responsibilities.

Contextualized Instruction – Integrated education and training (IET) speeds understanding and utilization of the knowledge and skills needed for more complex occupations.

Labor Market Information (LMI) – Targeting of needed occupational training must be based on the timely and accurate data regarding wage rates, job conditions, competition, location and duration.

Partnerships – Successful workforce development efforts aren't just a connection between educators and identified industries, but also alliances with regional workforce development boards, Departments of Labor, Education, Higher Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and other health and human service agencies.

Funding – In a time of fiscal restraint, all possible sources of funding must be pulled together (“braided”) from tuitions, Pell grants (including “ability to benefit” special funds), foundation grants and federal Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act funds.

Reasonable Regulations – Too often, adult education programs that offer workforce development programs find that requests for proposals contain needless impediments such as strict income and age requirements, strict standardized test cut scores and inflexible training schedules (such as full time training during the day, when people have to work).

Connecticut adult education programs serve over 19,000 adults who are employed or who are seeking employment, including workers displaced by the advancing technology. Adult educators are all certified teachers who use contextualized instruction to make the connections between academic skills and real world applications that facilitate learning. In addition, over twenty adult education programs have already developed partnerships with employers to improve academic and language acquisition skills needed for proficiency and advancement in the workplace. Several adult education programs also have training partnerships with postsecondary programs that integrate basic education and skills training (the IBEST model) for high demand job sectors.

I am available to answer any questions either at this committee hearing or by email at downesd@caace.org.