

Connecticut

Higher Education Committee, 2/5/19

Testimony in support of:

- Proposed H.B. No. 5001 AN ACT ENSURING THAT STUDENTS IN THIS STATE RECEIVE HIGH-QUALITY SKILLS TRAINING.
- Proposed H.B. No. 5833 AN ACT EXPANDING ADVANCED MANUFACTURING CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS AT REGIONAL COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGES.
- S.B. No. 799 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.
- H.B. No. 7027 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MANUFACTURING AND TECHNOLOGY

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Nora Duncan and I am the state director for AARP CT. You may be surprised to see AARP in this committee. I know it is a first for me. I am really excited to be here because we are working closely with high schools and colleges across CT on a manufacturing pipeline project that may be different than the “pipeline” you are accustomed to discussing.

CT has done a great job getting students interested in manufacturing. So much so that the demand is outpacing the supply. The need for instructors is great. It is so great that about a year ago the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center at CT State Colleges Universities (CSCU) reached out to us with a request for assistance in identifying and recruiting retired manufacturers who might consider applying their real world skills in the classroom.

At the same time I was working with Goodwin College to offer AARP members a 25% tuition scholarship with a marketing focus on certificate programs in in-demand fields, such as CNC manufacturing.

Not being sure what I was getting into, we worked with some key collaborators and convened interested parties from the CSCU system, Goodwin College, manufacturing and labor and began putting our heads together on how to work collectively to help meet the demand for qualified manufacturers. A study was commissioned to determine the level of interested in exploring classroom instruction by those working in the field. I have included the “Manufacturing Instructor Evaluation Results” with my testimony, but let me share the high level findings:

- Interest in teaching exists, but instructor training, supports and guidance are needed;
- The main reasons respondents want to teach is to give back, build the future-manufacturing workforce, and prepare students for lucrative careers;
- When considering messaging, half stay informed about advanced manufacturing developments and events from an association newsletter, websites, or their employer and one-third rely on social media for information
- Respondents seek information from their associations;
- In thinking about their transition from full-time work, respondents would like their employers to share a variety of opportunities with them including flex-time and part-time work options, teaching, mentoring, and volunteering; and
- Timing is everything; of those interested in becoming an instructor, about one quarter (27%) would like to learn more when they are nearing retirement, 19% would like to learn more in mid-career, and 18% would like to learn more early in their career.

I am neither an expert in higher education nor manufacturing, but I know an opportunity when I see one and so do my new friends who actually are the experts. In January we hosted our first retiree recruitment event at the Wallingford Board of Education – because this is also about our high schools – and 12 retired manufacturers joined us to learn about the array of opportunities available in the classroom. From professional mentoring, to lab supervision to a new 3 day program at Central CT State University that helps develop the skills needed to transfer hands-on experience to the

classroom setting, the entry points are such that a retiree could earn a little income by working a few hours a week or entirely re-career into a full time position.

We currently have two more events on the books, one in March and one in June, which I have highlighted at the end of my testimony. I hope everyone will help us promote these events in recognition of how important it is to fill these classroom positions so Connecticut can meet the demand of students and fill the 13,000 jobs in CT manufacturing. I believe that the success of manufacturing in our state is so important to our economy that I have even dedicated our April "AARP: The Bulletin" Connecticut page to telling this story. That lands in the mailboxes of all of our nearly 600,000 members.

When you are making policy, please continue the trend that expands the opportunities for instructors in our state and private colleges with real world experience who lack a college degree, contemplate what you can do to support retirees who have many years to give to the next generation, and tell your colleagues in the Education Committee that this real world experience is also needed in our high schools and that they have barriers that might come down so more doors can open.

Your Next Act in Manufacturing: Building Tomorrow's Workforce

March 26, 2019, 9:00 AM

Goodwin College, East Hartford

<https://aarp.cvent.com/ManufactureEHartford>

June 13, 2019, 12:30 PM

Tunxis Community College, Farmington

<https://aarp.cvent.com/ManufactureTunxis>

All events can be accessed from the AARP CT event page at www.aarp.org/CT.

I can be reached at nduncan@aarp.org or 860-548-3161.

Thank you for your time and efforts.