



**Testimony of the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors Submitted to the Higher Education
and Employment Advancement Committee February 5, 2019**

**RE: S.B. 799; H.B. 5001; H.B. 5833; H.B. 7027, Acts Related to Workforce Development and Jobs
Training**

Senator Haskell, Representative Haddad, Ranking and other distinguished members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS) on the above referenced bills.

My name is Steven Hernández, Executive Director of the Commissions on Women, Children & Seniors & Equity & Opportunity. I am joined by our 2GEN Fellow, Ms. Rosa Rada, who I will now ask to provide the bulk of this testimony in favor of several of your proposed bills.

The State of Connecticut and the New England region are experiencing workforce shortages. These shortages are concentrated within the skilled manufacturing sector. Often underpaid and under skilled workers will get stuck in a low-paying job because they do not have avenues or opportunities to acquire critical and necessary training. Workforce research shows that these workers are often young, non-white, and have experienced diminished educational opportunity.

Meanwhile, from Idaho to Mississippi, Portland Oregon to Portland Maine, the skylines of cities and towns are dotted with cranes and their people are finding well-paid work through coordinated high school to workforce pipelines that include Higher Ed as a key participant.

CWCS administers the state's two-generational initiative. Two-gen, or a whole family approach to jobs, recognizes that a family's income determines a child's wellbeing and future prospects. When a parent has a stable, well-paying job, their children thrive and are ready to learn. This is true for every family. To join families in their journey towards economic self-sufficiency and to sustainably break cycles of intergenerational poverty, it is imperative that we adequately provide avenues to train for the jobs available in our state today, and in the future. This is good for CT's residents, its businesses and our state

Another key component to our 2GEN work is the systems reform necessary to allow agencies to talk to each other, sharing data and resources more efficiently on behalf of the people we serve, and to work

Connecticut Commission on
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CWCS



CEO

Commission on Equity and Opportunity

with industry, philanthropy, and academia to constantly stay ahead of demand and promote a nimble workforce that is ready to meet 21st century needs in a 21st century model.

Regarding S.B. 799 and H.B. 5001: These Acts would provide a better understanding of workforce development in our state. This is a critical first step, similar to that undertaken by the State of Tennessee before it partnered with Nissan to bring state of the art job opportunities to its residents. CWCS supports efforts to gain insight into how to better prepare students in our state for well-paying jobs.

Regarding H.B. 5833 and H.B. 7027: These Acts would improve access to advanced manufacturing training and high-quality skills training for students in our state. CWCS supports efforts to broaden access to jobs training, especially for students of color and for those in economically distressed areas.

Gaining a better understanding of our state's workforce needs while adequately preparing all students for success will break cycles of intergenerational poverty and advance the economic well-being of our entire state.

Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to working with you on these and your other endeavors.