



TESTIMONY OF CBIA AND THE CONNECTICUT MANUFACTURERS' COLLABORATIVE
before the
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
February 14, 2019

The Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA) and the Connecticut Manufacturers' Collaborative (CMC) appreciate this opportunity to provide

testimony in support of:

S.B. No. 26 AN ACT MAKING PERMANENT THE MORATORIUM ON APPROVAL OF A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PROGRAMS AT INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

S.B. No. 131 AN ACT MAKING PERMANENT THE MORATORIUM ON THE APPROVAL OF THE OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PROGRAMS AT INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

and in opposition to:

HB-7088 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING PROGRAM APPROVAL AT INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Good afternoon Senator Haskell, Representative Haddad, Senator Hwang, Representative Hall and distinguished members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is Eric Brown and I serve as vice president for manufacturing policy and outreach at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). I am also coordinator for the Connecticut Manufacturers' Collaborative and am providing testimony today on behalf of both organizations.

The CMC is comprised of all the major regional and statewide manufacturing associations across Connecticut, including CBIA.¹ CMC associations represent over 1200 manufacturing companies with tens of thousands of employees throughout Connecticut.

Throughout the fall of 2018, the CMC held several strategic planning sessions to define the broad challenges facing manufacturing in Connecticut and provide recommendations for addressing those challenges. Most importantly, and for the first time, those recommendations were developed through a

¹ Aerospace Components Manufacturers (ACM), Connecticut Business and Industry Association and its affiliate (CBIA/CONNSTEP), Connecticut Tooling and Machining Association (CTMA), Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Association (EAMA), Manufacturing Education and Training Alliance (METAL), New England Spring and Metalstamping Association (NESMA), New Haven Manufacturing Association (NHMA), Smaller Manufacturers Association (SMA)

single, unified collaboration of Connecticut manufacturers – those who face these challenges every day and know first-hand, what needs to be done to effectively address them.

I am certain it comes as no surprise to you that a recent poll of CMC association members identified workforce needs as the highest priority concern for Connecticut manufacturers. Addressing those needs, both now in the years to come, requires an “all of the above” approach with respect to educational and training resources.

Public and private entities are teaming up to build effective workforce pipelines, primarily serving the unemployed and underemployed of all ages and rapidly getting them into entry-level, full-time manufacturing careers in just a matter of weeks. Technical high schools are producing very capable workers who are well-prepared for skilled positions in manufacturing starting on day 1. Community colleges, both private and public, are playing an important role in educating students who are new to manufacturing as well as those who may have entry-level skills and want to advance their training to a higher level. And the 4-year colleges and universities are going to play an increasingly critical role in preparing the manufacturing workforce of the future as technologies rapidly advance and become mainstream in a “manufacturing 4.0” environment that encompasses businesses of all sizes.

To be effective and sustainable, institutions of higher learning must be connected to manufacturers in their communities as partners and be able to quickly respond to fast-evolving training needs of those businesses. One of the great strengths of our current independent schools of higher education is their capability to quickly develop new educational programs that meet the immediate and varied needs of manufacturers in their communities. Under the current curriculum approval moratorium, which is the subject of these bills, these schools are aggressively and effectively engaging with their community employers and responding nimbly to their workforce training needs. SB-26 and SB-131 would ensure this critical flexibility is maintained for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, CBIA and the CMC strongly support these measures.

SB-7088 on the other hand, takes what appears to be almost the opposite approach by ensuring that the moratorium will end on July 1, 2019 – or sooner if regulations are adopted. Regulations that would likely add restrictions and curtail the current, critically important flexibility described above.

Accordingly, CBIA and the CMC urge this committee to support the approach recommended in SB-26 and SB-131, of effectively making the current moratorium permanent. Adopting the original moratorium has helped a portion of Connecticut’s educational ecosystem fill a hugely important workforce need and, in our view, their ability to do so should continue unimpeded.

CBIA and the CMC appreciate this opportunity to share our perspectives with you. We would welcome the opportunity to work with you as you take on the daunting but critically important challenge of ensuring Connecticut manufacturing has the workers it needs now, and in the future.

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