Good afternoon. My name is Eric Brown and I serve as vice president for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents thousands of businesses, large and small, throughout the state of Connecticut with the majority of our members having fewer than 25 employees.

CBIA greatly appreciates this committee’s recognition of the urgent need to ensure a broad menu of effective education options are critical to ensuring Connecticut has the workforce it needs for a rapidly evolving, innovative economy.

Having effective school counseling and other public school programs to educate students and parents on the realities of today’s workforce needs and opportunities as well as the variety of education and career options to take advantage of those opportunities, is critical.

We understand the intent of this bill is to develop long-overdue guidelines for comprehensive, effective and efficient school counseling programs at the elementary, middle and high school levels. We support the development of these guidelines within available appropriations and would also urge that the process for developing those guidelines include the involvement of private sector employers, particularly in sectors with high employment demands such as manufacturing.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and your consideration of our position.