Testimony of

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Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc.

Before the

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

April 29, 2019

Regarding

**SB 1129 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE COMPUTER SCIENCE
AND TECHNICAL TALENT IN EDUCATION**

The Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc. (CCAT) offers the following comments on the above-referenced proposed bill to implement various initiatives that will support the development of a technologically trained workforce to meet the needs of Connecticut employers.

CCAT is a nonprofit corporation that provides services and resources to entrepreneurs, businesses, industry, academia, and government. Our wholly owned IT services subsidiary, Novus Insight (Novus), provides infrastructure planning, cloud strategy and implementation, security and data protection, disaster recovery, hosting services and application development.

CCAT fully supports the addition of computer science and programming instruction in our public K-12 education system introduced in Section 1 of SB 1129. Computer literacy and coding have become fundamental skills in the 21st century workplace. The reliance on programming and software tools will continue to grow in the advanced manufacturing sector as new technologies are introduced and embraced. And as a rapidly expanding technology services provider, Novus – like other IT companies – struggles to hire the trained workforce needed to support their growth.
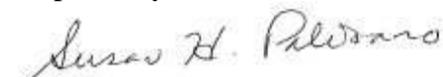
As an organization that recognizes the value of early introduction to career opportunities, CCAT commends the inclusion of a comprehensive model of instruction that calls for scaffolded instruction from elementary through high school. We also support the requirement of a standardized curriculum that promotes best practices, and provisions for out-of-school time experiences that offer additional opportunities for students who are especially interested in these content areas.

The importance of qualified computer science educators cannot be understated, and CCAT further supports the provisions of Section 2 regarding pre-service teacher preparation and qualification of instructors. We understand the impact first-hand workplace experiences such as student internships and teacher externships can have on learning, and fully support Section 7. Similarly, the inclusion of tax credits for employers providing apprenticeship training in both manufacturing and computer programming introduced in Section 8 is a critical component in expanding on-the-job and earn and learn opportunities for entry level employees and should be supported.

Finally, CCAT believes the development and implementation of programs of instruction for Connecticut's K-16 students are best left to the expertise of the State Department of Education and the Board of Regents and Office of Higher Education, and we therefore oppose Section 12 of this bill calling for the creation of a Chief Talent Strategy Officer in the Governor's Office.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of the important concepts introduced in SB 1129 that will benefit Connecticut's students and employers by supporting computer science instruction.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Palisano

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