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Representative Michael
D'Agostino

SENATORS: Kissel, Osten, Winfield, Witkos

REPRESENTATIVES: Ackert, Allie-Brennan, Arconti,
Candelaria, Cheeseman,
D'Amelio, Gibson, Hayes,
Luxenberg, Riley, Rutigliano,
Winkler

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Good afternoon. I'm gonna call this public hearing of the General Law Committee to order. It is 1:31 p.m., on Tuesday, February 23rd. Before we get started, I'll just reach out to the Rankings to see if either Representative Rutigliano or Senator Witkos has anything to say at the start of the meeting.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): I think spring is on its way, Mr. Chairman, and I'm ready to proceed.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): From your lips to God's ears, Senator Witkos. So, thank you.

REP. RUTIGLIANO (123RD): I appreciate it, Mr. Chairman. I'm looking forward to hearing from everybody today. So, let's get going.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Great. All right. Thank you Representative Rutigliano. Okay, with that, Mr. Clerk, if you could call the first person to testify. I believe it's Johnny Dach from the Office of the Governor.

SAMUEL CLARK: Yes, Jonathan Dach, also testifying with Michelle Seagull and Arunan Arulampalam.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay.

SAMUEL CLARK: Okay, they should be coming in now.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay, great.

JONATHAN DACH: Can you hear us?

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Yes. And so, Johnny, is there anyone else? It's you, Commissioner Seagull and then Arunan?

JONATHAN DACH: That's right.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): That's it. Okay, please proceed.

JONATHAN DACH: Thank you, Senator Maroney. Thank you Representative D'Agostino, Senator Witkos, Representative Rutigliano, everyone here in the General Law Committee. I'm Johnny Dach, as previewed, I'm the Governor's policy director and I appreciate your providing us another opportunity, second year in a row, to talk about the Governor's proposal to expand economic opportunity. I wanna get to that conversation, so I'll just put some fast facts on the table. Twenty-five percent of Connecticut's workers need a state license to do their jobs. It's up from 5% in the 1950s, more than any other New England or Mid-Atlantic state.

And in general, that's a good thing, those licenses protect public health and safety as well as consumer confidence, employee welfare, they're a win-win. But sometimes they discourage young adults from moving here, skilled workers from moving here, other people from pursuing promising careers, and that hurts workers and employers and consumers and the economy at large. So, Section 1 of this Bill makes licenses more portable between states. There's twin language pending before your colleagues in the Public Health Committee and together those departments oversee--

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Not you.

JONATHAN DACH: Together those departments oversee occupations from accountants and architects to

veterinarians and vascular surgeons. I'm a transplant to Connecticut myself, and I don't like the ones in our state motto, and so you can take it, for me, it's an incredible place to live and to work, and to feel welcomed. And every person who moves here not only benefits from life in Connecticut, but also makes life here that much richer for the rest of us, the new residents or new customers for our businesses, newly vibrant neighborhoods for our kids.

But there's bipartisan consensus out there, that intricate job and state-specific licensing requirements discourage people from moving here and elsewhere around the country. We're not denying those people licenses, we're deterring them from applying in the first place because they think, rightly or in some cases wrongly, that they'll have a hard time. They're missing from our data, as well as from the streets of our state. Folks at the Federal Reserve have found licensed workers are 36% less likely to move between states and the Obama Administration concluded that licensing is a significant barrier to relocation and recommended that states harmonize requirements to the maximum possible.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Sorry, I'm on a General Law meeting.

JONATHAN DACH: What would the Bill do?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): So anyway, that's my view, is that--

REP. RUTIGLIANO (123RD): Senator Winfield, you may wanna mute your mic, sir.

JONATHAN DACH: Thank you, Senator. Thank you, Representative. So, what would the Bill do? If you moved here with a US license and you'd practice in your home state, good standing for at least a year, you'd have the chance to demonstrate your competence

on the Connecticut test, you'd have to pass that test the same as anyone else. The test ensures that all of our licensees have mastered the job and any Connecticut-specific material required to do it here.

There are paths in our state to licensure without examination but this is not intended to be one. You also have to really move here. One question we heard from the Committee last year was, what does it mean to be a resident? So, we pulled a definition right out of the state income tax code to align that definition with folks who are paying state income taxes as residents. And you'd have to pass any background check and pay any dues required of other licensees, and the department would be able to choose the right practice level and to deny licenses in the best interest of the state.

I wanna flag one change from the Bill language last year which had a two-year license requirement in your home state, this language takes it down to one. Flexible, of course, on the number and on so much else, but we amended that proposal after we saw the language that passed in other states in 2020. And the National Conference of State Legislators has a nice rundown from a few weeks ago that I can send around if folks are interested. But you talk, for example, if you've had a license for one year, they don't even make you take the Utah exam and that passed there with a unanimous vote. Colorado has no time requirement at all, and that Bill had bipartisan co-sponsors and unanimous votes in both chambers.

So, if we could replicate those times of Bills here, we'd be amending the current patchwork of job-specific licensing requirements to create a clear and consistent and welcoming policy that you and I can explain without paging through the Connecticut general statutes to find the requirements specific to every individual profession.

And I think, and the Governor thinks that would make it easier to attract people and employers here to Connecticut, without being a radical departure from current practice, because our departments and our boards are already pretty much in the business of welcoming, not denying, people who wanna work in Connecticut. But this will give potential residents predictability and the state another common-sense tool for a more mobile world.

If you heard the Governor's press conference earlier this afternoon, you heard that really for the first time in a generation that pandemic means that tens of thousands of young families are choosing Connecticut, and this Bill is intended to help thousands more do the same. I appreciate that aspects of it are controversial, and the Governor is ready to work with the Members of this Committee and with all of the stakeholders that we'll hear from today, as well as those we won't to chart a path forward. Very quickly, Sections 2 and 3 of the Bill, happily, I think are less controversial. They build on Connecticut's already strong laws preventing discrimination against people with criminal records.

One of them would replace an old fashioned good moral character requirement with language that we borrowed from the DPH statutes, which clarifies that licenses can only be denied after a case-specific consideration of a felony conviction, and also allows a department to enter into agreements with people rather than denying their license outright. And Section 3 directs our agencies to figure out whether we can pre-clear applicants before people invest in the training and education required to apply.

Background checks, character requirements, they're like interstate licensing in one respect. We never even see the people who are discouraged rather than denied. There's a local Law Journal article that says, the number of applicants formerly denied admission has always been small but the number of

deterred delayed or harassed has been much more substantial. So, I'm hoping we can work together to make some common-sense changes to overcome that. Thanks again, to everyone for the time, I'll turn it over to the Commissioners to correct my mistakes, and then we'll all be available for your questions.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you.

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Oh, yeah, I suppose I should go next.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Yes, Commissioner Seagull.

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Commissioner for consumer protection and with me is Arunan Arulampalam, Deputy Commissioner. We're here, certainly, to lend any additional information or that that the Committee may need in understanding the Bill that was just discussed. Also, the other three Bills on your agenda would also address DCP issues, and so we're happy to answer any questions on those as well. So, with that, I think you have our written testimony. And just in terms of division of labor, Arunan was on the Commission considering collateral consequences of criminal convictions so he has a lot of the knowledge about, sort of, how that language and some of those recommendations came about.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Great. Arunan, would you like to proceed?

CMMR. ARUNAN ARULAMPALAM: Sure. Yeah, thank you, Senator Maroney, and other distinguished Members. I'll just put a little bit of--Johnny got it right on Sections 2 and 3, I just wanna put a little more meat on the bones of, sort of, how those came about. Those are obviously-- they came from priorities within the Office of the Governor dealing with criminal justice issues and within DCP as well, but also were really informed by the Commission on the collateral consequences of individuals with criminal records that was chaired by Representative Porter

and Senator Kushner, in which we went and heard public testimony from people in correctional facilities, at Cybulski in York on the barriers for folks who have criminal records who're trying to get into licensed and registered trades, both ones that we administer, and ones that other agencies administer.

And so, in Section 2, which deals with good moral character, I think it's pretty straightforward, it's a very subjective measure of whether or not we should license someone to decide whether or not they have a good moral character. It's a measure that's very open to bias and we think a more fact-based requirement that's based on the 46A-80 statutory requirements for licensure is a better guidepost for those decisions. Section 3 is a little more complicated.

For a number of professions, a number of professions that we administer licenses for, occupational professional careers trades in which you have to go through apprenticeship programs, for 4-5 years, maybe longer. For other professions, when we were at York Correctional Facility, we heard about folks who had gone to school for nursing degrees or social work degrees, you have to do all the education, the years of education ahead of time, and then the end of that process, you get licensed by the agency and so, your criminal background check is run at the end of that process.

And so, essentially, it functions as if I had-- any one of us would have to go to college and find out at the end our four years at the college, whether or not our degree was gonna be good. I think that we can look through our records, we have tried to ensure that the amount of people that are not getting-- that are not allowed to sit for the exam to obtain an occupational license because of their criminal backgrounds is very limited and is in cases where it's tied specifically to the offense.

Cases in which electricians or plumbers are going into people's homes, and have violent sexual records, for instance, are clear cases for us. But there's this rumor that I've heard from folks, in prisoners from folks, who've tried to go to apprenticeship schools, that when they have really basic criminal convictions on their records for drug possessions or for more low-lying offenses, they have told by folks at some point in the process, "Don't bother signing up for the apprenticeship school because PCP is never gonna license you."

We know from what we've heard that this is a barrier to entry and so, what section 3 would do is, it kinda takes a look at all of the licensing across state agencies, looks we would each report on the feasibility of centralizing those licensing processes in one place, which I think has the added benefit of when your licensing agency doesn't also have to make the decision on the criminal background, it adds a layer of objectivity to that decision.

And then, report on the feasibility and the cost of creating some sort of a pre-check process so that folks who go into these careers can before they obtain their education, before they enter several years of school, some of these schools incurring debt, they can figure out whether or not they would be able to clear a criminal background check. So, it would be a report out to OPM on the feasibility of that process. So with that, we're all happy to take questions. Thank you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Great, thank you very much. I'm gonna go in the order that I saw the hands, so we're gonna start with, Senator Osten, then Senator Witkos, then Senator Winfield. I'll remind you as we go through. And then Representatives Winkler and Cheeseman. But, Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, my question is for Mr. Dach, relative to

the licensure. What is the policy to making sure that the qualifications of someone coming in, in particular, revolving around elevator? We had this Bill last year, it was very clear, it was a privatization attempt, this time it's not as clear that it's a privatization temp--attempt, but I'm not convinced that we're actually protecting the people. So how do you make sure that someone that comes in with a license from another state has the same qualifications that we require someone from Connecticut to get?

JONATHAN DACH: Thank you, Senator. I think the test does that work, right? The test is Connecticut's ultimate guarantor that the people who are doing the jobs, taking the life and safety of themselves, their colleagues, members of the public into their hands are able to do it and are able to do it here. And we should have confidence enough in that test that people who pass it are able to do the job. And if Connecticut has slightly higher training requirements than other states, but people have been practicing safely in those other states for at least a year, we believe they deserve an opportunity to at least try to prove themselves on that Connecticut test.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Well, thank you for that.

JONATHAN DACH: And you have experience on the ground would substitute for any small differences in training requirements.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you for that. Are you requiring them to let you know where they were trained and what level of training that they had in the application process of license to license?

JONATHAN DACH: We are, as well as any things on their record that might have come from their home state that would be disqualified here.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): What kind of things, as you call them, what they be?

JONATHAN DACH: The Commissioner in the room may be better teched-out on, but I'm imagining anything from fair to finish continuing education requirement to some sort of disciplinary violation in your home state, any blemish on your record would be disqualifying here, under the law.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So, the test that you're taking, is that a test that's administered by a Connecticut-based company? No disrespect to this Administration, but they've been contracting everything out, is a test run by another state?

JONATHAN DACH: So, it's gonna vary from occupation to occupation and so maybe I'll defer to the Commissioner to provide some salient examples. But some of these tests are going to be Connecticut designed, Connecticut administered, others are going to be places where Connecticut and all of the other states already look to some sort of National Authority, as we do in nursing, or architecture, physician board certification, to tell us whether or not someone is competent to practice.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. Commissioner, if you could just wait a second, if I could-- before you answer that question from Mr. Dach. My understanding is that the tests are being administered by a Florida-based company that is an open-book test so someone can copy the answers from the book to answer the questions, that's my understanding. Can you get to us, as a Committee, the information on all of the test where they're being taken, that you're recommending in this piece of legislation so that we can be assured that the public safety of people is-- are being protected? In particular, relative to elevator work, this is the second year in a row or the third year in a row that the Administration has attempted to get rid of elevator inspectors at the state level, and I'm not

certain why that is, but I've noticed a continued pattern of trying to privatize work.

And you said that there was a companion Bill in Public Health relative to licensure? Now I'm well, okay with us allowing veterans to come in with the skills that they're taught in the military, often under far more onerous conditions, but I'm not as convinced that this Bill really addresses public safety and I'm not as convinced that all this is, is an attempt for the Administration to fill the gaps that they have refused to hire people for. So, that's where I am right now. So, if you could get us that information and if you still want the Commissioner to answer the question, I'm fine with that. But that's my deepest concern, is that we're not really protecting public safety.

JONATHAN DACH: I appreciate that. We'll follow up in writing about the details of the test for elevator, and perhaps the other Chapter 393 license types, again, between this Public Health Bill, it applies to everyone from accountants to veterinarians. So, DPH has something like 86 license types, I'm not sure how many Commissioner Seagull has. But we'll start with the 393s and if you want us to follow up with others, we'll absolutely be able to do that.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): That would be great, thank you very much.

JONATHAN DACH: You're welcome.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay. And I believe the question in regards to-- for the Commissioner, was in regards to the potential blemishes on someone's record that might disqualify them, is that right, Senator Osten?

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): I didn't-- I know that Mr. Dach was, sort of, handing off, so to speak, part of the question, but I thought it was more about the testing and the licensure. I don't understand how we are ever going to know what someone has a record [Inaudible] I think that's Representative. So, nonetheless, I don't know how we track that, because it's really not something that is easy to track when someone has a ding on their record, if that particular state is not tracking that ding. And we all know; the State of Connecticut is not great with their IT and tracking mechanisms.

I'm not certain that other states are in an equal position, so we can posit that that's true, but I'm not convinced that that's true on how we track somebody's record. We may be able to track their criminal record but even that is not necessarily something that's easy to do. So, I am concerned about this legislation and with the information that Mr. Dach is gonna give us in writing, I'll look at that but right now, I don't think that we protect public safety with this Bill.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay. Thank you, Senator Osten. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to everyone. I will start with some of the easy questions first before we get into the controversial ones. And this is probably in for Commissioner Seagull. The Bill that talked about alcohol and chocolates, I know, I kind of think that came about as we had an individual who's a confectionary testify at a previous public hearing on something else and we were all kind of surprised we didn't allow that in Connecticut.

But I couldn't get from his testimony and I couldn't get from yours as to the percentage of alcohol in the items that we may have to change our statutes, and do you know what-- if you had a chance to research it, what is the average percentage of

alcohol that are found in these like mini chocolates? Will we have to go that route or do you think we're prepared to move forward with the Bill as is?

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Well, I'm not sure what the average amount is in the confections? I know we worked on the language for the Bill so I would hope that the kind of amount set there, I believe it was 5%, was gonna cover what would be-- what we think would be necessary.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Okay. The other part-- question, Commissioner, was, why a study if to extend the hours at the gaming facilities? It's pretty simple in my mind, either we're gonna extend them past the allowed one or not, and the question is, within a 50-mile radius of the state border, if we drew circles around all the gaming institutions in Connecticut, do they all pass that muster around the 50-mile radius?

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Not a Bill that DCP proposed? So, it does ask us to do something but I can't, kinda, speak be too much to what the thinking was in wanting to study the issue.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): And, Senator Witkos, the idea originated from a proposed Bill from Representative Rosario, I believe. And so, it's looking at ways to help, I guess, recover from the loss of revenues for some of these entertainment facilities during the pandemic. And I think you're right, there is an issue with the mileage, because I think if we go 50 miles from any border it encapsulates almost the entire State of Connecticut. So, that is something we may wanna look at. But that was off of a proposed Bill. And I'm sorry, you can proceed, Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Thanks. And this, I guess, I'll start to questioning on the Governor's Bill with some couple of simple questions. One, I support

section 2. Section 3, this is for Johnny, if you don't mind, since all of the agencies that are kind of enumerated in that Section, they all report to the Governor, why in the world do we have to have a law that says you have to do what the Governor asks you to do for a study?

JONATHAN DACH: Yeah, it's a fair question. That language comes out of the legislative Commission on the Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Conviction as the Deputy Commissioner described, and we wanted to put forward language responding to that legislative-led inquiry and making clear that we were taking it seriously. But should the language not pass we would be taking on this work regardless.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Yeah, I'm supportive of it, I think it's like CFB-enacted but I was just curious as to why we had to put in statute. Now, on to, I guess, Section 1 of the Bill that seems to have the most consternation from folks by-- after my review of the written testimony. And I just, kind of, wanted to run through a couple of things, and it came up that under the previous questionnaires, comments about requirement of a test, and that it may be open-book, do we have any idea-- Under current regulations for folks that take these tests, what is the pass-fail rate if it's a past failure, or is it a rated numerical or alpha number system? From my understanding from folks that I've heard that it's a very, extremely difficult test and now, even if you're going through the current programs that we have in Connecticut.

JONATHAN DACH: I'll defer to the Commissioner on whether we have information on pass-fail rates, if we don't have it to hand, we can, of course, follow up. Some of these tests are gonna be open-books some are gonna be closed, my hunch is that the ones that are open-book, it's because the boards and other relevant authorities have decided these are open-book jobs, and if you're gonna have the codebook or some other manual in front of you as you're

performing the work, you should be able to have recourse to that during the test. But those have been designed, as I understand it, with input from the boards and could be revised with input from the boards to accommodate a more open border reality. But, Commissioner?

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Yeah, so there are a variety. I don't know the pass-fail rate. We do a lot of tests, 'cause even within each license type, there's a lot of stratification. So, with an electrician, there are five or six different, maybe even more, levels, depending on whether you do all electrical work or just a subset of that. So, we could probably try to pull some information and get a sense. And then also, some people do have to take the test more than once. So, ultimate pass-fail rate may vary depending on whether you're looking at do people ultimately pass or do they pass the very first time they try?

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Yeah. The reason for my line of questioning in that respect was that, we-- our current residents who follow the current process, also may have some difficulty in passing these examinations. So, if somebody is moving in from another state, which is allowed under the statute or the Bill before us, but they had to have their license in this issue they may have the same difficulties passing the same tests that are on folks may just as well have difficulty. Is there anything in the Bill that negates the folks going before the current board system where they sit for review?

JONATHAN DACH: No, this is intended to supplement, not supplant whatever systems may exist within individual professions for people to go before the relevant boards for licensure. Often those reviews lead to the granting of a license without examination, because they've looked at your portfolio and they feel confident in your body of

work. This is just meant to get you access to the test.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): And could you speak to-- I don't know if you had the opportunity to read any of the other testimony that was submitted, but a lot of folks are surmising that with the fail-- with the passage of this Bill, were it to become law, that we would lose jobs in Connecticut, and there would be public safety issues abound and people will be injured. Could you just speak two comments? I'm generalizing it, but I-- when those individual folks come up, I will be asking them specifics.

JONATHAN DACH: Yeah, I had an opportunity to read some of it. Some of it was seared into my memory from last year's version of this hearing as well. Two pieces to that, on the Public Health and Safety piece, I hope these tests are hard, I hope they challenge people coming here from out of state, I hope to challenge people who have been educated in this state, because these jobs are serious business. And you're taking, as I said earlier, your own health and that of the health of the public in your hands.

And so, if these tests are cakewalks, we should have a serious conversation about making them adequate guarantors of public health and safety. I think this will increase jobs in Connecticut for the Connecticut residents for two reasons. One is, we really will have strict requirements on who counts as a Connecticut resident. You can't move here to a hotel for a week, take the test and go home. It's gonna be the same definition of Connecticut residents as in the state tax code, domiciled here and tend to remain 183 days, at least, every year. And the more people that we can persuade to move here, the more jobs they're gonna be for everyone else.

And if there are a few more elevator operators or veterinarians, there'll be a lot more people who need to ride elevators or take fluffy to the vet.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Well, I applaud you for bringing the Bill back again this year, and thank you for the pre-explanation of-- I know it was written up in some of the testimony of the reduction from two years to one year for having a license in order to be one of the prong tests to make sure that you can sit for the exam in Connecticut. But one of my-- I have two more questions, one of the concerns was that showing examples of what's happening in Texas now, versus if this were up in Connecticut, they don't know our codes here and I'm curious if the test has some of Connecticut's building codes or standard safety codes that may be different from state to state, that they would have to know in order to pass their licensure here in Connecticut.

JONATHAN DACH: Yeah, thank you for the question. I do think this comes down to different codes between the states, Texas's code wasn't prepared for cold weather, that doesn't mean that people trained in Texas aren't prepared to operate in cold weather and obey local building codes wherever they might be practicing. I would hope that the tests speak to those Connecticut-specific requirements, I don't have first-hand information. Again, if they don't, I think we need to have a serious conversation about how rigorous those tests are, whether they're adequately protecting public health and safety today. But my high-level understanding for those professions that you're referencing is they test people's ability to look up the relevant sections of the Connecticut code. And if DCP has more specific information, they, of course, can come in.

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: I don't have more specific information, but we can look at it. But these are not easy tests that just anybody could pass, you have to know what you're doing with regard to the trade at issue. And that is why a number are open-

book, is because it's not a test on memorization, it's do you actually understand how to kinda perform the work. But it's gonna vary across everything, there are so many different license types captured by this Bill and the companion one in DPH.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Oh, thank you. And I hope, kinda, to Senator Osten's point, that when we do review and approve the examinations, that folks can sit for that. If there's a section that has to do with our standard codes, building codes to safety codes that are particular to Connecticut, that that'd be part of that examination. So, it will negate the naysayers of saying, "Well, they don't know what we do here in Connecticut, they may have been trained in a different state."

And I can speak from a personal example, when I had a pool put in my house, the guy never did a pull-up in Connecticut, he did them in Florida so it's a little bit different. Different codes, and we've required different things here in our state than other states do. And I'm sure that could be something that runs across the trades. And I also want to-- Johnny, thank you, for you got you, and the Commissioner Seagull and Deputy Commissioner, for looking as removing some of these barriers to our licensures in our state. And I hope next year we can look at some of the things like the glass licensing. I know the glassware licensing; I know that's kind of an issue.

We've got to kind of align Connecticut with other states, in my opinion, when we have some very onerous things. And it is a barrier, in my opinion, that folks can move about the country and do the work that they've been trained to do, yet they come to Connecticut and we are known as the land of study habits. In some respects, it's for good reason, but in other respects, we gotta get with the times. And I think this Bill moves us in that direction, and I just wanna say thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, that's all my questions.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Senator Witkos. Next, Representative Winkler-- Oh, I'm sorry, I apologize. Senator Winfield, I believe was next, then, Representative Winkler, Representative Cheeseman, and Representative Ackert. Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I'm gonna apologize to start with. This is my first time on a Committee, I haven't really been part of the conversation before so some of my questions may be redundant. But I wanted to start off with something that Mr. Dach said, which was, the more people we convince to move here, the more jobs there will be for everyone. I think that's potentially true, I guess, it depends on the number of people that actually move here and the amount of economic activity that's created.

And I think it also would not be true at the same level for every one of the licenses that we've been talking about for each of these trades, or jobs, or whatever the case may be. So, I think that's an interesting thing to take into account. But I wanted to go to Senator Osten's question about what's going to guarantee certain things. And Mr. Dach, you said the test is the guarantor. So, I just wanna make sure that I understand the Bill, because when I'm reading the Bill, the part that's talking about this test, I think we're talking in line 28 through line 34 Section.

And when it talks about the test it says, the person-- the Department of Consumer Protection shall require a person to take and pass all or a portion of any examination required, blah, blah, blah. So, when we're talking about the test being a guarantor, are we suggesting that the whole test would actually have to be taken, or am I misunderstanding that Section?

JONATHAN DACH: So, it's meant to provide some flexibility because again, we're dealing with so many different license types here that may have different rules. Between the two Bills in DCP, and DPH, there are probably 400,000 or 500,000 people who are licensed by those two departments in these professions, and in trying to write language that provides the clarity and explainability that we're looking for, sort of, industry-wide, we need to leave the department's little discretion.

And we need to leave them that discretion because there are professions that don't have Connecticut-specific tests. If you're a nurse, every state in America, you need a degree and you need to take the NCLEX test, standard nationally administered test for nursing. It would not make sense if you moved here to Connecticut after practicing in Virginia for five years for us to make you take that test a second time. And so, the language here is meant to only require their taking or retaking of Connecticut-specific information or Connecticut-specific tests.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): So, then I'm--

JONATHAN DACH: If there's better wording to accomplish that objective, we're, of course, very open to it.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): I'm not at that point, right? As I said, I haven't had this conversation before, I just wanna be clear about what you're suggesting. What you're suggesting then, therefore, is that because some of these tests have portions that are universal and other portions that are specific to the state, what that language allows for, is for us to only require the portion that they would not have seen before in having taken the test to get licensed. And do you-- I get that that's the purpose, do you think that language could potentially operate differently? And that-- Well, I guess you're suggesting that somebody would have

already taken the test, okay. Can you-- So the Section of the Bill that is lines 42 through 52, and this is the portion that talks about the 25 states, maybe it's because I haven't been involved in this conversation before, what-- why 25 states? What is the 25 states about?

JONATHAN DACH: So, the intent behind this Section, and perhaps I should flag that this was also new to the Bill from last year. It's modeled on language from Bills in IOWA, and perhaps one or two other places I can follow up is, Connecticut, as Senator Witkos, has just alluded to, in the case of glass, is in some cases one of the fewer, in fact, the only state in the country to license certain professions. And so, we wanna create some mechanisms for people who have been doing this job in states that don't require the license and move to Connecticut, to sit for the test, prove that they're competent to practice the profession here in Connecticut, without having in their 30s or 40s to go back to school. 25 is a somewhat arbitrary number but it was just meant to say, this is a profession that at least half the states in America don't think there's a reason to license in order to protect public health and safety.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Okay, so the 25, half of 50 states, so that's half of America, okay, got that. The-- I'm sorry, I'm trying to locate my notes. When I was listening to the conversation about the good character or moral standing, whatever that was, I thought I'd have made a lot of sense to me. I do have a question about lines 107-115, which is that new language that relates to 4680, and I guess my question is, given what 4680 says, what does this language add that we can't do?

JONATHAN DACH: Arunan, you should feel free to come in on this. This language we borrowed last year from the equivalent Section of the Public Health Title. Right now, the department is still constrained by 4680, right? It has to deny licenses only after a

context-specific examination of someone's criminal background. But it's not clear to people reading the statute what the department can look at, and so this is meant to provide upfront clarity, that it's only felony convictions that would even trigger that investigation or consideration by the department, not some low-level misdemeanor that you've had in your youth.

To counteract some of the misinformation, honestly, that's floating around out there, we looked last year at a sample from 2015, we had more than 2000 licensed applicants. At DCP we denied seven of them, and there were more than 70 with felony convictions on their record. The department is not denying licenses for no cause, they're complying with the law. So, we need to make sure that the law reflects current practice and is clear to people about what it does.

CMMR. ARUNAN ARULAMPALAM: Yeah, that's absolutely right, Senator. It doesn't specifically add to 46A-80, but it narrows the scope so that it focuses on felonies.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): And, Mr. Dach, when you were talking about the number of rejections, those were related to people who are coming in the state trying to get reciprocity? What was that number of rejections related to? What set of people?

JONATHAN DACH: Those were-- I'm relying on my memory from prep I did for this hearing last year, so I apologize. I think it is the number of people in Connecticut who applied for the license.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Okay.

JONATHAN DACH: And got denied on the basis of their moral character, as narrowly defined by the department.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): And I guess that my question, and to a degree, your response brings up another question. So, what-- I guess the first question I should have asked first, because I wasn't at the very beginning, as you heard, I interrupted when I came on, trying to figure out my buttons. I don't want you to redo your testimony, but what is the stated purpose of doing this Bill? So that I'm clear how to frame my question.

JONATHAN DACH: Section 1, or Sections 2, or 3, or both?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): I guess the Bill in totality. What are we trying to accomplish?

JONATHAN DACH: We're trying to think to the right size occupational licensing requirements that exist in general to promote public health and safety and are important tools for promoting public health and safety as well as consumer confidence and participation in the economy and the welfare of the workers themselves, but that throw up occasional, and I think accidental, barriers to interstate mobility. And two, can deter young people from pursuing promising professions.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): And I guess that brings a question about rejections from people coming from other states, what does that landscape look like, currently?

JONATHAN DACH: So, we don't reject that many people. I actually don't have the numbers to hand. But the problem isn't the people we reject, the problem is the people who look at this and think, "Man, that really looks like a pain in the ass." Excuse my language. "I'm gonna move somewhere within New York, rather than to Connecticut or another state." And so, it's the people we're deterring from ever applying and so we never see those numbers in our data.

If you look at the people we reject, it's not very many, our department and our boards really are in the business of trying to welcome people here to Connecticut, but it doesn't always look like that. And this would give us, if passed, in some form, something that we could take out onto the streets that you could put on a Billboard and say, "You can move to Connecticut and if you can pass the test, your license will be able to move with you. You don't have to worry about your ability to continue feeding your family or affording a place to live here."

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you for that. And I get that we may not have hard data on this but do we have a sense of how many people that, or what that trend is in terms of people looking at the state and saying, "I would go somewhere else,"?

JONATHAN DACH: There's a sort of landmark report from the Obama Administration, from the Department of Labor and Treasury in the White House Council of Economic Advisers. And I hope you'll have a chance during this hearing to hear from some of the people in the Obama Administration who produced that report. It includes a statistic that people in licensed occupations are 24% less likely than similarly situated individuals, same age, same educational background, to move across state lines, although they're basically as likely to move around within the states. So, it's not that they're just more sedentary by nature.

And then there was follow-up research by a group of scholars at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis that looked not at licensed professions as a whole, but at those licensed professions that really suffer from state-specific requirements, so not your doctors that enjoy pretty good interstate portability already. And it found that those people were 36% less likely to move across state lines. So, we're talking about 25% of our economy in licensed professions and a third less likely to move here.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): And if you know, the second report, who was that done by?

JONATHAN DACH: It's by a group of scholars at the Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis. And I can send it around for the Clerk to share with any interested Members, or it's-- there's a link to it in the online version of our testimony.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): I'll just go to your testimony, I appreciate that. To the question about safety, so I was listening, and then I was reading as well and I saw that we went from the two years to one year, and I know that you answered that briefly. Am I correct to understand that your answer is that, we went from two years to one year because the manner in which this has been passed in other places was one year?

JONATHAN DACH: That's right. When we introduced this Bill last year, it had been introduced and passed in 2019 in Arizona or similar language had, and that was it or close to it across the country. Since we adjourned in 2020, it's been passed in a significant number of other states-- I shouldn't say significant, 5-10 other states. And those states have either included no time requirement or a one-year time requirement.

And so, we've downshifted to align ourselves with what we'd seen in Governor Polis' Bill in Colorado, Bill in Utah. But nothing magic about that number. If the Committee in its wisdom or stakeholders are concerned, I think that that should be higher. I think there are probably a lot of people who've been practicing in other states for four or five years who're looking forward to moving to Connecticut, and if we can work to address even that segment of the population, I think that's a victory for us.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): I understand that. I do think-- we don't even have to have this discussion

here, but I do think it's instructive to understand how we made the decision, particularly, since there's a lot of conversation about public safety. And if we were doing it to be competitive with other states then-- and I don't mean this to be negative, right?

But I would assume that if we were doing it to be competitive, then why not go to zero, right? If public safety is an issue, then I guess I'd ask, what is the thinking behind going to one? Is this really like we just split the baby in half? What is the real thinking behind that? Because that-- I think it's a legitimate question, whether or not it's actually an application here are not, the public safety question. So, if you wanna answer that, I'd be happy to take the answer, if you wanna have that conversation later, whatever the case may be.

JONATHAN DACH: I'll take a quick stand at it. As you know, I'm always available to you and any Member of the Committee as all my colleagues and staff is for one-on-one conversation. The reason I think behind the one-year requirement is, we don't want people to say that it is easier to get a license in Virginia than in Connecticut. I don't want someone to go to Virginia, get that license, and then come try to use it here in Connecticut. Although I do think that the test provides an adequate safeguard in these circumstances, but if you had to live in Virginia and work in Virginia for a year, my hope is that that does something tamp down concerns about people sort of cycling quickly through another state with easier licensing requirements, and then trying to import that back to Connecticut.

Again, I'm confident in the test and I'm hopeful we can all be confident in the test, but this is an additional safeguard against that eventuality.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Okay. Two more questions and then I'll stop, 'cause I probably could go on

since I haven't engaged in it before. Lines 38 through 41, it talks about the Commissioner's ability to reject the license in the best interest of the state. And I don't know what that would be. What are we talking about there? 'Cause it sounds to me like we're trying to open this up as much as possible, so what reasons what would we reject a license outside of the things that we've already put into the Bill?

JONATHAN DACH: Yeah, this too is language that we borrowed from other states [Inaudible] in passing this is to align our licensing standards as much as possible. I was trying to rely on language that's already in law in other states and was passed with majorities in other states. There may be professions where, again-- I don't know, it's a good question, Senator, I think the test really should be the adequate safeguards.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Okay.

JONATHAN DACH: But if there are professions where the department has concerns that there's a particular state whose standards aren't quite up to snuff, that Section would free the department to issue guidance saying, "If you move here from x state, we may require a little more of you than just passing the Connecticut test."

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Okay. And, final question, so this has impact on the ability of anyone to come into the state and to practice whatever their profession is, and we do have reciprocity laws. So, passing this, what does it do to the reciprocity laws that we have?

JONATHAN DACH: So, my hope is it doesn't do anything, it creates a parallel path to licensure. Most of our reciprocity laws provide a path to licensure in Connecticut that bypasses the exam. So, this provides a parallel path and entitles you to take the exam even if you're from a state that

doesn't recognize Connecticut licenses in return. And if you think about this as we all should, I think from a public health and safety perspective, nothing about Virginia recognizing Connecticut licenses makes it any safer for people from Virginia to come practice in Connecticut. And so, stepping away from that, "I give something you give something," framework, I think can help provide us more flexibility to people who wanna move here without having any impact on public health and safety.

There's language in the Colorado Bill that says, "If admitting someone to licensure under this provision would jeopardize one of our reciprocal agreements then the Department shall deny that licensure." And if there's discomfort on the Committee or from certain professions, that existing reciprocity agreements would be jeopardized by this, we can certainly look at language similar to that in Colorado's.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Senator Winfield. Representative Winkler.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Yes. Thank you. I'm afraid I'm also new on the Committee. I just wanna be sure I understand. So, there's 50 states, the criteria for things like elevator operator, electrician, or whatever, are different from state to state, and this-- what we're looking at now, the first portion, would allow anybody from any of those states to come here, as long as they were able to do the work in their state, take an exam, and be able to do the work in our state. Is that about, right?

JONATHAN DACH: That's right. What's different from state-to-state is often the training and experience requirements required before someone can sit the test, not the job itself. Some state may require

1500 hours to become a barber, Connecticut requires 1000 hours to be a barber. If you've been a barber here in Connecticut for five years and you move to one of those states that requires 15 hours, should you have to go back to school for 500 hours, or should the state be able to rely on your experience on-the-job to grant you a license in that second state? And so, this tries to move us away from a, sort of, educational pedigree-based approach with strict and inflexible requirements and towards something that looks at your experience on-the-job and your demonstrated ability to perform that job here in Connecticut on the test.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): It seems like we're saying that the experience and other requirements that we established in this state, ostensibly for public safety, were arbitrary and that any other state's qualifications will do.

JONATHAN DACH: I don't think we're saying that, although I do think there may be isolated areas of the Connecticut general statutes where it's worth revisiting our education and training requirements. What we're saying is that year of experience on-the-job, that we discussed during one of the prior questions, substitutes for any differences in educational and training requirements. If you're an occupational therapist, you are required to do a six-month supervised practicum in Connecticut, you're only required to do a two-month supervised practicum in Maryland, but you've been practicing in Maryland unsupervised for a year. If you come to Connecticut, should you have to go back under supervision or should we be able to rely on the judgment of our other state and your year of experience there to allow you access to the Connecticut test?

REP. WINKLER (56TH): How does someone prove they have a year of experience there?

JONATHAN DACH: People would be able to show us the date on when-- They have a license from that other state, and they would be able to show us the date on which it was issued and we'd be able to reach out to the other states and get any disciplinary materials or other issues. And, yeah.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Are you saying that you're committing that somebody will contact the other employer will say and verify that the person actually did something during that year?

JONATHAN DACH: No, I don't-- I guess I don't want here to pledge the Department to that kind of work, I think we can put the burden on applicants to bring forward materials that will allow us to make that determination.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): So, you say residency, DRS-style residency. Does that mean they have to be in this state a year before they can take the test?

JONATHAN DACH: No, just like you don't need to state a year before you start paying Connecticut income taxes. If you're domiciled here, which means you live here and you intend to remain here, then this would allow you to apply for the license. And it would apply also, and we'll hear from Bob Ross and you've heard in written testimony from General Evon, as well as from the US Department of Defense, it would apply not only to residents but also to military spouses who are stationed here with their in-service spouse who face significant barriers to employment during relocations.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): So, you can take the test as soon as you get here?

JONATHAN DACH: That's right.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Okay. So, the test as a guarantor, I have a lot of limitations, but I'm an excellent test taker, I could probably pass the

open-book exam for anything that you could throw at me, and how can I say such a thing? I once, in Connecticut, took the offset press operators' exam. Now I couldn't operate an offset press, never even actually saw one, but I was making a point to DAS that test-taking is a skill on itself, and that a good test taker can pass anything. So, while the guys with the inks under their fingernails couldn't name the rollers of the machines because they said orange one, green one, black one, I was figuring out from the Greek and Latin roots which one was big, which one was small, and which one was a different color.

Long story short, I placed number two in the state and I couldn't possibly run an offset press machine. Likewise, I might be able to pass with my ham radio knowledge of electricity open-book exam, I might be able to pass an electrician's exam, but you wouldn't want me to wire your house, I'm telling you. It's just, the test as a guarantor is-- It just makes me shiver, anyway.

JONATHAN DACH: Well, I'd love to hear the long version of that story some time, but we don't have to take the Committee and the Members of the public down that road with us. The test is an additional guarantor, it exists on top of the requirement that another state have thought you were worthy of being trusted with an electrician's license or an offset printing license, in that example.

And I do think-- I'm a proud Connecticut resident, I'm proud of Connecticut but the notion that we know something that that they don't in Massachusetts, Virginia are arguing about who can and can't safely operate on-the-job, I think should give us some pause. So, we're looking at certification from that other state as well as the test. And the test, really, is designed to make sure that people have any local knowledge that they may need to practice here in Connecticut,

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Who's going to check all the other states to see what they require for all of these licenses? To find those states whose requirements are so slender that even we won't buy it?

JONATHAN DACH: Yeah, I'm not sure there's a state out there whose requirements are so slim that if they extend the license and that person could pass the test, I would feel uncomfortable with that person practicing here in Connecticut. But if there are professions of particular concern, then that's where the department's ability to deny licenses in the best interest of the state I think comes into effect.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): I have been looking at other states' requirements, I've seen states with 400 hours of on-the-job experience and 4000 hours of job experience. It seems that we are willing to accept anything, and who is gonna raise the issue? Certainly not the people coming in to take the test. I don't even know how the agency would ever find out if the requirements in some states were so slender that they're dangerous. How would we know?

JONATHAN DACH: I think as we'll see from the rest of this public hearing, we can probably count on people in that profession here in Connecticut to flag for us any concerns about public health and safety.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): You're going to trust people doing the job now to tell you that another state that they're not involved with has different criteria that aren't-- how would they know?

JONATHAN DACH: They know through their National Associations, they know through word-of-mouth, they know because they've taken the time to look. If some states have 400 hours and some states have 4000 hours, I think we should all spend next summer going through all those state statutes and looking at

where Connecticut's an outlier, and where it could be brought into line. But the purpose of this Bill is to really put our trust in other states and in our state test.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): In the example I cited, Connecticut was 3000 hours. All right, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Representative Winkler. And, Representative Cheeseman.

REP. CHEESEMAN (37TH): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. Thank you for being here today, Jonathan. I recently got off a public hearing in finance and we were talking to Professor Fred Carstensen about Connecticut's dismal economic growth. We are number 40. We had economic growth of 0.6%. And it occurs to me, maybe it's our incredibly onerous laws regarding things like licensing, regarding things like recognizing that other states may not be the Wild West that have been described here, that their criteria for working here are valid, that years of experience is also valid.

I'm gonna be having questions for Bob Ross when it comes regarding military licensure, but this idea that the rest of the country is allowing cowboys to practice unfettered and Connecticut is the only protector of consumer welfare and well-being, I find extraordinarily disturbing. And I wanna thank you for being here today, I want to thank the Governor for putting this forward. I think the more we can do to increase job opportunities, whether they're for people within the state or people coming from outside the state, and this is something we should be focusing on. We are looking at thousands of vacancies in skilled trades.

Yes, we wanna provide those opportunities for the people who are working and living here, but we also wanna encourage people to come from elsewhere, and let it be known that Connecticut is a place that you

can live and thrive and work. So, I realized this isn't really a question, this is more of a rant. But I wanna say I'm in support of anything that would make it easier to raise a family and live and work in Connecticut, and I also think licensure in many ways is so harmful to women, people of color.

If we create all these barriers to entering the skilled workforce, what are we doing? We are not improving the economy for Connecticut, we are not improving individual lives, and we are not creating the kind of world in which we wanna live. So, thank you for being here. Thank you, Mr. Chair for indulging me and I'll let everybody else ask questions. I've gotten that off my chest now. So, thank you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Representative Cheeseman. Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Dach and Commissioner, thank you for both being here. I applaud this action being taken as we move forward. And there's a tiny little state our borders create some havoc for people that are trying to get into professions by which across the state you can't practice the profession that you're in. I do have a question start with, we have multiple boards for a lot of these plumbers, HVAC, and elevators, are they involved in the decision making at all? The sponsors do not see that in the language, I think it'd be a valuable tool to have them part of this.

JONATHAN DACH: So, the department can describe the extent to which they're involved in the process today. They are not involved in the language contemplated before you, except insofar as they would have a role designing the tests that people have to take, working with the Department to identify places where it might be in the best interest of the state to either deny a license or to issue that license as a lower practice area here in

Connecticut and the state from which the person originated.

I think the Department relies extensively on the advice and counsel of the boards and will continue to do so. But the point of this language is to provide what is sorely missing to people interested in moving across state borders, which is, predictability. People aren't gonna uproot their lives and move to Connecticut to roll the dice as to whether or not a group of people reviewing their file in the room will be kind enough to even permit them the opportunity to take the exam, they need to get the license to do their job.

So, that board has an important role if someone moves here from Montreal, or if someone moves here and doesn't want to go back to take the test, and they should continue to perform those functions. But we should in parallel provide people who are considering life in Connecticut, the confidence that if they move here, their license can move here, as long as they take the test and had one in good standing in their home state. But, Commissioner Seagull, interacts with the boards on a much more regular basis so I should let her come in if she likes.

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Yeah, no, we do rely on input from the boards on a lot of these things. So, right now there's, sort of, the two paths to sitting for the exam. One is, doing a Connecticut apprenticeship program, and you get, sort of, a letter when you've completed that telling you you're ready for the exam, and those kinda go straight through can go and sit for the exam. And then the other pathway is someone who wants to come and seek permission to take the exam based on having equivalent education and training.

And so, those are ones we've actually formed a workgroup, we work-- we have stepped down from our board, somebody from DCP is the Director of our

Occupational Professional Licensing Division and a Representative from DOL, they'll take a look at that application, decide are they ready to sit for the exam, some need to be rejected out of hand, sometimes they'll get back to the applicant and say, "Look, you're close but you need to really fill in some experience or education in this area, and then come back to us."

And that's a process we've been kind of working out in conjunction with the boards. And generally, that group tends to agree on where-- which sort of bucket these fall into, so it seems to be working well. And I meet quarterly with our board Chairs, and this is just in the trades. Things are different and I think that's the hard thing, there's been a lot of focus on elevator or electrician, which certainly are important licenses we issue, but across the state there's a lot. So, the process I described is there for some of the other professions, there are national exams. So then, the analysis is different but that's sort of how the process with those trade boards are working.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Commissioner. And Matter of fact, you just explained how I got my license. In 1985, I got out of the Air Force and they had to review my background to see if I could take the test and my background fit exactly what our electricians are in the State of Connecticut, and I was able to sit for the test, rather than go through another four-year apprenticeship program to sit for a test that I had more knowledge than the average person because of my background in the Air Force.

But I wanna also speak to the safety component of this. And we keep hearing about safety and safety and safety, I know where it's driven from, and what I wanna make sure that people understand that the Connecticut, especially to trade licenses, the trade area, that we not only have to get all the experience to be able to sit for the test, no matter what states are in, so a lot of this comparable to

Connecticut, then you have another year under you're practicing, with supervision again, because people don't just let-- when you hire somebody, they're just not willing, really, not understanding, so they have that.

And then the State of Connecticut in the trades, we have what they call inspectors, that inspect your work. So, to continue to drive that component of it, whatever may be in the trade area, specific that I know a lot about, is Connecticut is mostly-- I don't wanna say over-regulated but highly-regulated between how hard it is to get the license? And when I hear this open-book test, is an open-book test, because the person has to know how to use the codebook, so they can use it on a job site, that's why it's open-book. We change the codebook every three years, to memorize a 800-page book every three years, good luck.

The goal of the open-book test is to see if you know how to competently use a codebook to follow the trade that you're in. So, it's actually the value that you want the open-book to see if a person knows what they're doing with the book so they know the trades. And the licenses are national licenses-- national codes. So, to say that person from this day is a lot different than that is not true. There may be differences in some areas, but not that great of a difference. So, I do wanna thank Senator Winfield for his comments, because having not come from that area, he has some very great questions and I wanna thank him on that.

But just to give you-- when we think about a driver's license, that you can have a driver's license in one state and you gotta come to Connecticut, you don't go through the whole driver's training all over again, it's very similar. Granted, it's a trade practice, and we already have the background. So, thank you for your work on this and I look forward to moving this forward and get it to pass. Thank you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Representative Ackert. Senator Winfield, your hand is up. I'm not sure if it's just up from before and the same with Representative Winkler. I don't know if either of you has another question. So okay, I think that is just up from before. I'll ask a few questions, and then I believe my Co-Chair is going to take over and ask some questions.

I do wanna share to Representative Ackert's point, I do understand that in some ways memorizing facts, especially things that are going to change, when we have information at our fingertips through our phones are more powerful than any computers we had when we were kids, right? And so, it is easy to access information, but as someone who, I guess, is somewhat of a professional test taker and has taught people how to take tests, I do share Representative Winkler's concerns that the test isn't necessarily the best safeguard, because it is possible to learn how to take a test without necessarily learning the material. You did explain how we went from the reduction from the two years to one year.

I do believe in previous versions of the Bill, you had to prove that the training was substantially equivalent, right? And I don't think we have that language now, right? It's just that you've had the license for one year?

JONATHAN DACH: Yeah. There're current places in the Connecticut general statutes where we require the training to be substantially equivalent. That was not in our Bill last year, and it's really the sort of standard that we're trying to move away from because the focus on training equivalency is not broad enough to apply to the person who, okay, they had a little bit less training, but they've been on the job for that much longer.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay. Another question is, I know there's a Bill, there's a Companion Bill in

Public Health, we also license teachers, there was no Bill in education or looked at in any of the other-- Or is it being contemplated for any other areas than public health and consumer protection?

JONATHAN DACH: So, when we introduced this Bill in General Law last year, it was a broad application, it applied to all professions licensed in the state, and we realized that we were asking the Committee to take on matters that were outside of its jurisdiction, and perhaps its comfort area in terms of your deference to your colleagues and other Committees of cognizance.

And so, we wanted to introduce Bills this year that were more narrowly tailored to the scope of the Committees that were hearing them. And we have licenses issued by departments across the state and they're captured, actually, in Section 3 of this Bill, and we direct those departments to look at what they can do to standardize background checks, if you're a bail bondsman, your licenses issued by CID, if you're a milk tester, it's from the Department of Agriculture, but the lion's share of them are in DCP and DPH, a little more than 200,000, I think, at DCP, 260,000 at DPH.

And partially for simple bandwidth reasons, we wanted to start in those two Committees that we and I think most people on the street think of it's doing, as I said, the lion's share of the licensure. And if they're successful conversations here, and hopefully on the floor, we can take lessons learned from them, and come back next year with an eye towards expanding them to other professions as appropriate.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): And I think, I definitely-- We have competing interests, right? In that, we wanna make sure that we're protecting-- our primary charge is to protect the health, self-safety, and welfare of those governed, right? And so, we wanna

make sure that people are properly licensed so that we're keeping people safe.

But the other thing is, I know a lot of universities when they're recruiting faculty, or certain companies, when they're recruiting, they wanna recruit-- our companies and universities wanna recruit the best and the brightest from around the world. One of their big concerns is when they're recruiting someone to come here, what's gonna happen with the trailing spouse, right? And are they gonna be able to work.

So, I understand it is important, and we see that, definitely, with the military, when they're coming with it the trailing spouse, are they able to find work while they're here? And in that instance, when they're only here for maybe three years, if it takes two years to get a license, or however long, they're not able to work almost the entirety of the time they're here. So, I do, again, see the need and understand the intent behind the Bill. So, thank you for answering those questions. And then, Representative D'Agostino, would you like to take over?

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have some follow-up questions. And I appreciate the long discussion we've had, I think it's necessary for the Committee Members, both the seasoned veterans and the new Members, as we get into this field. Just to expand on the discourse you just had with Representative Ackert and then my Co-Chair, in the first instance-- these are more for the Commissioner. Commissioner, not for you and I to nerd out on the wall, but I do think it's worth you spending a couple of minutes to just remind/educate the Committee on North Carolina Dental.

And because the question was asked about what rules the boards have, particularly on the trade side, and I wanna make sure everybody understands that there

is a Supreme Court check on what can and cannot be done and how much plenary power that you have.

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Okay. So, this North Carolina dental case, it was brought by the Federal Trade Commission challenging North Carolina Dental Board's, a decision they made about it, in this case it was scope of practice. But what they were looking into is to what extent do the Antitrust Laws apply to a board that's kind of appointed by the state? And so, what it held broadly is-- and there is sort of state action immunity that generally applies and they're looking does it apply to one of these trade boards, or in that case, the Dental Board.

And what it held is that, there isn't antitrust immunity for a trade board that's made up, primarily, of active market participants. And I think, generally, that's been thought to mean that the majority are active market participants that was certainly the facts there. And so, what that means is, there needs-- If one of these boards, whether it's ours, or DPH's their active market participants, which most of them are, if they make a decision that is viewed as anti-competitive, they could be held to be accountable under the antitrust laws.

And so, in response to that, several years ago, what the state did is, we wanna protect the state and the boards themselves, we don't want those members in sort of the filling these voluntary positions to all of a sudden find themselves being charged with an antitrust violation as gave. At least with regard to DCP, we have now co-equal authority with regard we already did for enforcement, but with regard to licensing decisions with an expectation that we would be a check, provide state oversight on any licensing decisions to ensure there aren't denials or decisions being made that are anti-competitive.

And so, in conjunction with that, we've been working hard with our boards to ensure that their input is

being considered in these decisions. And another thing is just governing the trades that's being done in a way that protects the state from an antitrust challenge. And that, sort of, was the-- what led to us now forming this sort of licensing group, there was a concern, understandably, by the boards that now they weren't as actively involved in just denying or approving licenses or people to take the test.

And so, we formed this workgroup where we're involved, a number of the board is involved, and DOL is involved so that there's a Committee to do that.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Yeah. In a nutshell, Committee Members, what the Supreme Court is basically saying is that, members of the trade can't determine who's in the trade. There's a competitive problem with that and so, ultimately, our Commissioner's office is going to have the final say.

Now, as she's mentioned several times, they work collaboratively and I think it's very rare that there's a-- that the Commissioner overrules a decision, if somebody in the trade said this person is not qualified and makes that recommendation, usually, that's listened to, but ultimately that authority by virtue of this case does rest with DCP.

And that's the law of the land, that's not something we can change, which leads to my next question, both for you and Mr. Dach, how different is what you are proposing here from what the current process is for letting someone in from out of state?

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: I can answer, or do you wanna speak to this Johnny?

JONATHAN DACH: I'll layout sort of a quick framework and then I'll let Commissioner Seagull speak to the specifics, perhaps especially in the

trades that we've spent a lot of this conversation on.

As I look across the license types in DCP and DPH that are affected by this, they break down into a couple of different categories, a lot of them are not affected, either because the national licensing standards are, in fact, standard, as I mentioned in the nursing example, everyone gets the same degree, they pass the same test, or because the statute already allows us to offer the test, or in some cases to offer a license without examination to people who are licensed in other states.

And then there's a final category where it doesn't apply because Connecticut's training and education standards are lower than other states. And I gave the example earlier of Barbering, where we require 1000 hours as opposed to 1500 in some of our neighbors. But then there are categories where Connecticut has training and education requirements that are higher than other states, and where we can only offer even the opportunity to take a test to someone who has met those education and training requirements, or to someone who comes from a state that's entered into an explicit reciprocal arrangement with Connecticut.

And so, this would change things for those professions to align them with much of what they do already, and what we see in other industries to allow them to come in on the strength of their prior license and their success on the Connecticut test to practice here.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Commissioner, anything else you wanna add better?

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: No, that basically covers it. It just creates a sort of different and, probably, brighter line standard as to when people who didn't go through a traditional Connecticut

apprenticeship program should be sitting for the test.

JONATHAN DACH: And I think that bright line, if I can follow up quickly, the bright line is important, because if you're one of the universities that Senator Maroney mentioned or another employer that tries to resolve a lot of two-body problems saying, "You can move to Connecticut, you might be able to get a license here. What's your profession again?" Okay, let's check Section 20-78C, of the Connecticut general statutes to see what the rule is for people who are occupational therapists. That's hard to explain.

Giving ourselves something where we can say, "If you were licensed in another state for a period of time, you can try to take and pass the Connecticut test." Even though it's not a radical change in most of our laws, being able to provide that simplicity and predictability, I think will make a big difference.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): And I think that's what I'm getting at, it didn't strike me as that radical of a change to what we're already doing. People are allowed to come here, as you said, it just kind of crystallizes a process for that. You had mentioned something else; I think it would be an-- I don't know what off the top my head, we should have a list, Commissioner, of all the licenses. I thought I heard you throw out a number, Mr. Dach. It can't be 200,000 different licenses.

JONATHAN DACH: I maybe-- it's 260,000 for DPH, I know that for sure because I have their list of 36 different license types. It's possible that quoting the DCP number as-- well, including--

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Just for clarity, he may be talking about people with a license, not actual incense types.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): That's what I'm trying to get, it's the actual categories. It can't be-- in order of magnitude that's done, we all would agree with--

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: We do a lot but not that much, yes.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): We should have a list, I think it would be-- the Committee would be well served to understand exactly the different categories we're talking about. And understanding there are sublicenses within groups, I think we should see those as well. I do think it's gonna be a fairly significant number, but I-- hopefully, not 200,000, but if you could get us that, I think that would be-- we probably could get it online somehow but I think it'd be worth just the Committee having that in one spot, so we know the universe that we're talking about here. If you wouldn't mind, if your staff could do that for us.

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Yeah, we have that available, so we can get that over to you. But, yeah, it's north of, I think, 200. That's including, we have things like liquor permits, so we have what we license--

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Yes, just permits that are encompassed by the licenses that are encompassed by this Act?

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Okay, yeah, we can edit that down.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): All right. So going back to what we were talking about with the role of the boards, and I don't know what kind of compromises is here, we haven't heard from the trades yet. And I know that's--I wanna focus on them because that's where the greatest amount of resistance is coming from, would you be amenable to or I'd ask you to be amenable to some language that would-- as we sort of

take-off here, the process people have to go through, they have to meet this, they have to practice for a year, they have to take the test, we'll come back to them a second, maybe we-- would you be amenable to include in that sort of another criteria of the respective board, if it exists, for a particular license has 30 days to make a recommendation to you, of up or down on this person, once they take the test or wherever that would fit logically within the-- in the process.

And that sort of codified and maybe it gives them some comfort that their voices are actually now statutorily embedded into the process, rather than what is going on now, which is that process, just would embed it into the statute and embedded into that process? I'm throwing that out there in sort of a potential compromise point that I hope you'd consider, and I hope they would consider it as well. 'Cause I know they've been concerned about the erosion of their role, which again, is not really their fault or your fault, it's a result of North Carolina Dental, but maybe including them in the recommendation process is a compromise here that both sides are willing to explore and I'd asked you to do that. I don't expect you to comment on it now, I just throw that out there.

And I'd ask other commentators on the trade side to comment on that as well as they testify, if we ever get them today. Another quest-- I wanted to just ask about Section E, which has got the-- which is this separate Section that you have about coming in if 25 states or more do not require the license, our research on that tells us that that encompasses only a select few licenses in the state, primarily the auto glass, the Glazers, and certain of the elevator licenses.

I'm gonna put the elevator licenses off to the side, because I do think that that's sort of a special category, particularly when it comes to safety and, frankly, the traditional role of elevator

manufacturers in this state as opposed to others. I will tell you, auto glass, and to some extent the Glazers, it's something this Committee has struggled with on a bipartisan basis. We looked at it last year, and as far as we can tell, we're the only state that has those licenses, and I think we're kind of wondering why.

I understand the arguments we're gonna hear about putting in HVAC is different in other states or a plumbing line below the frost line here versus Texas. I'm having a hard time understanding why auto glass is different in Connecticut than in 49 other states, and I'm wondering why we just don't get rid of that license, quite frankly, if 49 other states don't see a reason for it, and I have yet to see a public safety reason for it.

As my Co-Chair mentioned, there's a fine line between protecting consumers and protecting companies, our job is the former, not the latter, and I wonder if you have any-- I'd like your comments just on that Section, what it's designed to do. If I'm right about what it encompasses and what your thoughts are on that particular license.

JONATHAN DACH: You're right about what that Section is designed to do, I think you're right and your philosophical outlook. I don't wanna comment on that particular license, because I haven't spent as much time with that particular license type as the Committee, but I think philosophically, Governor Lamont is someone who has tried over the course of this COVID pandemic and his two years in office to look around the state for best practices, and if the majority of states or 49 other states don't see an upside to public health and safety in regulating a profession.

I think we would want Connecticut to take a hard look, with the relevant stakeholders, whether Connecticut should get out of the business of regulating that profession. In the interim, we offer

up Section 8, but there are certainly other ways to skin that cat.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Commissioner, I don't know if you had anything on that?

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Nothing to add, I mean, the [Inaudible] have been part of that statute since well before my time, so I can't speak to why, initially, the legislature included those licensing requirements.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): It's funny you mentioned that. I pulled the legislative history and from what I can tell, there is no real rationale for it. And then I found an interesting Harford current article from 2006 where the legislative proponent of the Bill couldn't explain why he was proposing it. So, it's hard to know exactly why we have that license, but there's some further review, I think, by this Committee, and I'll be interested to hear from those Members later.

Senator Winfield asked the question about the testing Section which was very good, and I may have missed the answer if this was covered so forgive me. But would you be opposed to the language that strips out your ability to waive the test, if we just made the test of requirement? I don't know what that-- I don't know how that fits with what's going on dental at all, but is there compromise potentially here 'cause people do seem to feel the test is important.

JONATHAN DACH: Yeah, and we feel the test is important, DCP, again, I should defer to the people with more subject matter expertise. But our intent there is only to get people who have already taken the same national test that would be required in Connecticut, or that have taken a test that the Department feels is similar to or identical to the test that would have been required here in Connecticut, out of having to go back and take it again. But that's an area I think ripe for further

discussion and I've no pride of authorship about how that Section and Subsection is structured.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Hopefully, that gives some Committee Members some comfort that we can move forward on this. Thank you for that. And then, finally, Commissioner, I'm gonna tweak you just a little bit on my last question here, it seems to me that it's gonna involve some more work for you but I assume there's no fiscal note attached to this Bill.

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: This wouldn't really require more work for us, we already have to contemplate people who apply for a license from out of state. This just kind of changes the standard on that, but it wouldn't change the fact that we need to do it.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Fair enough.

JONATHAN DACH: I'm looking forward to all the new revenue from the new licensees who move to Connecticut.

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: You're welcome to share that with us if you'd like.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): I'll let you guys discuss that up front. That's all I have. I don't see any more questions for you two. Thank you for your indulgence, thank the Committee for their patience, but these were important issues to work through and we will excuse you both and move on to our next speaker. Mr. Clerk.

JONATHAN DACH: Thank you very much.

CMMR. MICHELLE SEAGULL: Thank you.

SAMUEL CLARK: Okay, our next person is, Robert Ross.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): They are in the room. Mr. Ross, can you unmute? There you go. Can you hear us?

ROBERT ROSS: Yes. Can you hear me and can you see me?

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): I can hear you, I can't see you, but feel free to go ahead while we figure out the video part.

ROBERT ROSS: Okay, great. So, I'm Bob Ross, I'm the executive director of the Connecticut Office of Military Affairs. Thank you very much for having me. I am charged by statute for being an advocate for military families for our defense industries and our military bases. So, I work very closely with our congressional delegation on defense industry issues and also protecting our military bases, but family quality of life for military families stationed in Connecticut is something I spend a great deal of time on.

And what I wanna focus on here is military spouse unemployment. Their unemployment rate has been about 16%. That is so high, and that was before this pandemic, that is just kind of a normal course of things. We want our military families in Connecticut to have a high quality of life. We want them to come here to enjoy Connecticut, have a good experience here, raise families here, and maybe someday when they leave the military, end up here, retire here, and that's what I'm interested in on this Bill.

Military families need that second income, and they struggle with having spouses that move to a new state several times in a career and they can't find a job, or it is so onerous to transfer a license that they are having to forego that second income or be under-employed. This is a big issue on a national level, it's a national security issue.

We have a lot of service members who were making the decision to leave the Service because it is so hard

for their spouses to find work. The secretaries of the army, the Air Force, and the Navy, have all made it clear to the Department of Defense that they would like to see this issue of spousal employment, including licensed reciprocity, as part of the next criteria for basing decisions. What that means is, military bases will grow, they will shrink, they will be closed and this will be one of the criteria they're looking at, how has a state helped in this problem?

And so, I'm very much in favor of this Bill. I really would like to bring military spouses into this state, recognize their work experience and license from another state, get them into our workforce. That's good for the spouse, it's good for the military family, it's good for the employers who need their talent, and it's good for the state's economy.

So, I've sent you written testimony, I hope you'll look at it, it's only two pages long. It's got a lot of statistical material in it, but it's not something that I need to read to you. But I think I've tried to just characterize for you how important this issue is, the Department of Defense is actively evaluating this and scoring states on their behavior and their performance in addressing this issue. And I, sadly, have to tell you a Connecticut has got a very poor score on this relative to all the other states that hosts major military bases. So, with that, I'm happy to take your questions.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you, Mr. Ross. I remember your testimony from last year in this regard and we were all rather despondent to hear that, and I know that it hasn't improved. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. When you said we do really badly, where are we?

ROBERT ROSS: I saw a report from the, I believe it was the National Chamber of Commerce Foundation that did a study and we were ranked fifth. Now, there are other studies that are out where they don't rank us as badly, but we are way at the bottom. And I don't like that because, usually, Connecticut is out front on most of the scoring against other states. But on this issue, we just have not made progress relative to all the other states that we compete with. And we are competitors when it comes to hosting military bases and hosting military families, and we have not performed well on this issue.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): And my follow-up question is, is this because we don't have good policies or just because we have a very expensive state to live in?

ROBERT ROSS: I don't know. I think, probably, it's because we haven't addressed it. The issue has been percolating, it's become a very big national issue. The National Governors Association is talking about it, and I think we just haven't addressed it. I don't think there's been anything deliberate, anything-- no conspiracy here, this is just that we haven't come to terms with, we've got this real issue that harms military families and their quality of life, and it's having an impact on national defense and that's why the Service Secretary is upset. This is so important, we're gonna open and close basis about it. But I just don't think there's been a deliberate attempt or effort to not deal with it, we just simply haven't put it on the table and wrestled with it.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Well, I've got a lot of stuff up here in North Central Connecticut with National Guard, I know we have a lot of stuff going on in northeast--Southeast Connecticut. I think we have a vested interest in trying to get our arms around this, so I appreciate your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you, Senator. I do not see any more questions for you, Mr. Ross. We appreciate you always coming to this Committee and broadening our perspective.

ROBERT ROSS: Thank you. Happy to be here and I'm always available if any of the Members have questions, you'd like to talk to me about offline.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you, sir. Mr. Clerk, next please.

SAMUEL CLARK: Up next is, Jennifer Hunt.

JENNIFER HUNT: Members of the General Law Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in the state I called home for nine years. My name is Jennifer Hunt, and I'm a Professor of economics at Rutgers University, where I specialize in the labor market, including occupational licensing, and migration, and immigration.

Now, the aim of occupational licensing is to protect consumer safety when consumers cannot for themselves judge the quality of work that practitioners provide, nor the quality of the training of the practitioners, and occupational licensing can benefit both practitioners and consumers. But excessive restrictions, although they do raise the wage of those workers able to gain access to the occupations, hurt those workers who are unable to gain access, and hurt consumers who face higher prices without any increase in safety.

Now, the most relevant restriction for this hearing concerns geographic barriers. It's difficult for out-of-state-licensed workers to obtain a license in Connecticut, if they want to move to Connecticut and work, yet the COVID pandemic has given us a glimpse of the benefits of having inflows of skilled licensed workers, there was only the suspension of the licensing rules that allowed medical workers from across the United States to come to New York

and Connecticut to help in the darkest days of the crisis.

And of course, in normal times, the benefit of qualified workers is less dramatic but still significant. Not even better than Connecticut's unilaterally increasing recognition of out-of-state licenses would be a national movement to do so. And encouragingly, there are some signs, as Mr. Dach was mentioning, of this happening.

Now, of course, for certain occupations, especially those whose practice does vary regionally, it is necessary to check that workers are up to Connecticut standards, and examinations are included in the proposed legislation as a way of doing that. But in summary, states need to remove barriers through occupational licensing that are not necessary for protecting public health and safety in order to promote labor market opportunity and keep goods and services affordable. Thank you.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Well done in a succinct manner, appreciate that. Just looking to see if there's any questions for you, and I do not see any. So, thank you. Mr. Clerk.

SAMUEL CLARK: Up next is, Rodney Butler.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Mr. Chairman.

RODNEY BUTLER: Hey, good morning-- good afternoon, everyone. Sorry about that. Well, thank you all for your time today. I'll start off by saying [Foreign language 1:40:43] good afternoon, my friends on the General Law Committee. And just wanna quickly touch on HB 6460, which is the study for liquor hours at gaming and other establishments. And just a special thank you to Representative Rosario, and Senator Osten for bringing forth this piece of legislation.

And it's a study, and I understand that, but it's something that we've been talking about for some

time, just to remain competitive with other operators in the market. And so, when you think about the current environment, we're in, and the other legislation that we're pursuing during this session, and working diligently on and in negotiations with the Governor for the expansion of the gaming, this is also one that just helps us from a competitive standpoint, with our neighboring states, in particular, Massachusetts, allows for liquor hours to stay open till 4 am on the-- currently on the gaming floor.

It's something that we've talked about for years here in Connecticut, and so understanding it's a study and it means that it'll come back next year, but it's a step in the right direction, and just appreciate the consideration for it. I know my interim CEO, Jason Guyot, will be on shortly as well to go in much more detail about the importance of what it means to us from an economic perspective. But it really helps us in this time that we're in and recovering from this crisis and recovering from the point at which we went from 5000 employees down to 2000, currently, and looking forward to bringing them back sooner rather than later.

And the expansion of these hours, the expansion of gaming, and obviously, the-- this patient of COVID will all lead to the Connecticut gaming economy regrowing once again. So, really just wanted to share that with you all and quickly touch on that and express my support and appreciation for that.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you, sir, do appreciate it. If Bridgeport and the tribes can get together and find the builders, there's hope for us all. I look forward to doing this study. I think we may have some more questions, about questions for your COO, and I look forward to being able to bet on the Super Bowl next year, Connecticut.

RODNEY BUTLER: Yeah. Soon enough. We're certainly close in the negotiations. And just I appreciate

everyone's continued support and optimism that we'll get that across the finish line. So, thank you.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you for joining us, appreciate it. Mr. Clerk.

SAMUEL CLARK: Up next is, Ray Pineault.

RAY PINEAULT: Okay, good afternoon, everyone. Can you hear me?

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): You're on, Ray, thank you.

RAY PINEAULT: Well, thank you very much. Co-Chairs Maroney and D'Agostino, Ranking Members, Witkos and Rutigliano, and Members of the General Law Committee, my name is Ray Pineault and I'm the chief operating officer, Mohegan Gaming and Entertainment. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Committee in support of House Bill 6460, an act barring the study of the impact of extending alcoholic liquor service hours at gaming and other establishments.

I'd like to thank the General Law Committee for raising the Bill and Representative Rosario for once again being the leader of this important issue. The Bill before you is about keeping Connecticut competitive. We believe states should be moving forward on this idea and for those who have concerns, the proposed study would provide the state with irrefutable evidence the extension of liquor service hours will be beneficial to the state's economy.

The pandemic has ravaged industries all across the state, but particularly the effect it's had on the entertainment industry and those it employs has been devastating. We at Mohegan Sun and would like to extend the offer of working alongside the agency and studying the impact that extended liquor service hours would have. The study is an important step in

providing our entertainment industry the necessary resources it needs to recover.

Connecticut is a small state, and as a result, our entertainment industry is in direct competition with our neighboring states. There are some competitive issues we cannot control but those issues we can engage in, we should. This Raise Bill is an important step towards achieving economic recovery for Connecticut's entertainment venues with the added benefit of increasing Connecticut's economic competitiveness.

As a world-class resort, Mohegan Sun Casino competes with gaming facilities in Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Rhode Island for the very same clientele. Just four years ago, Massachusetts recognized the importance of its gaming entertainment venues to the health of its economy and enacted to extend liquor service to 4 am. Many of our customers are second shift workers who get off work at 11:00 pm or midnight and want to come to work casino for gaming entertainment and relaxation. Connecticut's limited liquor hours become an incentive for their-- these customers visit our New York and Massachusetts neighbors.

Connecticut can sit on the sidelines while in neighboring states attract our customers or we can understand the challenges around us and craft progressive legislation that allows us to compete with our neighbors and grow Connecticut jobs and Connecticut revenue.

Expanding alcohol service hours is not something we take lightly. We have had a responsible alcohol service program in place since Mohegan Sun opened and we expanded the program as we added restaurants. Today we have a comprehensive program that monitors and limits consumption throughout the property, identifies impaired patrons, and ensures their safety and the safety of the community at large.

Many resort casinos have 24-hour liquor service. To truly compete with Atlantic City, Connecticut casinos need to have 24-hour liquor service. The extension to 4 am, will at least bring us into some competitive parity with our surrounding states. This issue isn't about drinking as much it is the decision that consumers make in choosing a destination. What we want for the casinos and for Connecticut's tourism industry is for potential visitors to decide to come here because what we offer at Mohegan Sun or any other end-state venue is better than what is offered somewhere else.

This is more uniform approach and liquor service reduces the likelihood that people in times will feel pressured to finish an alcoholic beverage more quickly after last call. Our success is your success, both Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods Resort Casino are just as important to the residents of Connecticut as they are to our tribal members because of our respective agreements with the state. In 2019, the Mohegan Tribe and Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nations jointly contributed nearly 255 million to the general fund for distribution to Connecticut cities and towns.

From the time that those agreements were executed between our nations in the State of Connecticut, our slot arrangements have yielded almost \$8 Billion. Extending liquor service hours, we put Connecticut's entertainment venues in a better position to economically recover, in addition to increasing their competitiveness regionally. This as a study is an important step in ensuring that our entertainment industry can not only recover but thrive moving forward. We respectfully request that you advance House Bill 6460 to support all of Connecticut's entertainment venues, health and success by taking the necessary steps to allow us to recover and grow a post-COVID world. Thank you for your time this afternoon.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of questions. At what time in the morning can you start serving alcoholic beverages?

RAY PINEAULT: I believe, Senator, I'd have to check with the statute, I believe 8 am is the time in the morning.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): All right. And so, and part of your testimony was that you would monitor impaired gamblers to see that they were going out to their cars at 4 am drunk. And how would you do that?

RAY PINEAULT: Well, I would say that both of our facilities at Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods have state-of-the-art surveillance facilities. All of our staff are smart-trained on the service of alcohol and recognizing excessive alcohol. So, we take the time to train all of our team members on recognizing people.

We also hold our team members accountable for disciplinary action for over-serving guests, and we also have our own on-site protective police force that work in conjunction with surveillance and anybody that has a need-rated is addressed. We also have a system where we distribute pictures of any guests who has a need-rated that is recognized at any of our establishments that is shared with all of our staff establishments and throughout the casino floor and our back house service bars so those guests are no longer served on property.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): And my last question is, I've always heard this notion that the casino is pumping oxygen to keep people happy while they're gambling, and what is the truth to that, if anything?

RAY PINEAULT: Senator, thank you for the question. None whatsoever. We do put-- I will tell you that what we are doing now as a result of COVID, is we're

actually taking in the maximum amount of exterior air to circulate the air as quickly as possible, but it has nothing to do with pumping in oxygen to try to keep people awake.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): All right.

RAY PINEAULT: Just a nice moving picture raw scene.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): The myth dispelled right here. The Connecticut legislature. That's a great question, thank you, Senator. I'm looking, I do not see any other questions for you, so thank you very much, I appreciate you are coming out Mr. Pineault.

RAY PINEAULT: Thank you for your time today, Committee Members, I really appreciate it.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

SAMUEL CLARK: Okay. That is all we have for public officials. Jason Furman, if he comes in, he can testify when he's ready, but until then, up next is, Sal Luciano. He's coming in now.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Great.

SAL LUCIANO: Good afternoon, Senator Maroney, Representative D'Agostino, and Members of the General Law Committee. My name is Sal Luciano, and I'm proud to serve as the President of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, a federation of hundreds of local unions representing more than 220,000 workers in the private sector, public sector and building trades. We're dismayed that Governor Lamont would participate in the Billionaire Koch network, legal, legislative, and public relations crusade against occupational licensure.

For the Koch network and the conservative allies, occupational licensing standards are as offensive as labor unions. They don't much care for public policies that protect the health, safety, and well-being of workers, fearing that they care too deeply into their profit margins. They have spent millions of dollars producing ideologically driven academic studies and use their state-level spin networks to make licensing standards a political issue, like wearing a facemask during a global pandemic.

The American Legislative Exchange Council, ALEC, with its own deep connections to the Koch network, has been a willing accomplice. ALEC has written a model Bill for legislators to copy and paste in state capitals around the country. Their model interstate mobility and universal recognition occupational licensing Act has recently passed wholly or in part in a handful of states, including Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, and Iowa.

And now you have it before you in HB 6445. Section 1 of HB 6445 is from Section 110.02 of ALEC model Bill. The furious origins aside, the Bill undermines robust occupational licensing, which is a key mechanism to ensure the professionals are highly educated, trained, and experienced. It's the most effective way that Connecticut consumers can have confidence in the quality of services they provide. Teachers, nurses, electricians, plumbers, social workers and countless other professions are impacted by the licensing system.

It influences wages, consumer prices, employment, and mobility for workers who wanna take their skills across state lines. It's essential that licensing systems be sensible and strike the right balance between protecting consumers and promoting economic growth and employment opportunity. While we understand the intent of this legislation is to streamline licensing in professional occupations and facilitate license reciprocity between states, we

should be careful about making changes to standards without significant discussion and input from all vested stakeholders.

It is important to know that that did not occur, and I'm going to repeat that, that did not occur. We don't even know, as Representative D'Agostino pointed out, what the universe of licensing people we're talking about. With unemployment as high as 30%, in our licensed construction trades, finding appropriately licensed professionals is not the problem. We are losing our licensed professionals to Massachusetts and New York, where they are more likely to find work.

We suggest that Governor Lamont could do more to create jobs and drive economic growth if his proposed budget invested significantly in infrastructure so that licensed tradespeople could make a living in the home State of Connecticut. We urge the Committee to reject this Bill. Thank you.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you. There are some questions for you, I just wanna say, we rarely have a chance to have you here and I think it's appreciative of the fact that the General Law Committee does have a chance to have you here to testify. We don't often get labor-related Bills, except when they're on very specific issues.

You touched on something, I wonder, since we got you here, and I don't want you to get into, obviously, specific personal conversations you have, but if you could just elaborate a little bit more on just sort of the overall landscape that your members are seeing right now, and I think the overall context of this Bill in, both economically in Connecticut, but then in terms of your communications with the Administration, what are the areas you're seeing some disagreement?

And I'm asking that question 'cause I'm trying to figure out if there's a way to find some compromise

here, and maybe there isn't, but I think it's helpful to have the overall context in your perspective of where labor stands with the Administration right now.

SAL LUCIANO: So, I guess, there has been no real dialogue on this issue. And we pointed out that it is an ALEC cookie-cutter Bill. We understood and we appreciate what Robert Ross said, and we appreciate what Jennifer Hunt said. We understand that unneeded licensing is ridiculous, and we shouldn't have it, but let's identify what that is. We have standards for reason, even when we have skilled people, we had the situation like the April 23rd 87 L'Ambiance Plaza, where even with skilled workers, we had 28 people dead.

We just celebrated the 11th anniversary of clean energy with six dead workers, using the controversial blowout method in the gas plant. So, this is an important issue, and we're looking forward to be able to help where we can, but to just do this in broad strokes, we have some real concerns. And we-- to your point, we don't know if we're talking about teachers. I'm not suggesting the teachers from Mississippi are bad, but I don't know if we, necessarily, want somebody who is a teacher in Mississippi to teach in Connecticut.

So, until we identify who we're talking about, what we're talking about, I think it's important to-- as they say, the devils in the detail. We're not against opening up Connecticut, we're not against economic development. We have a 30% unemployment in some sectors in the trade here, so the problem isn't, we don't have enough licensed people, we just don't have enough jobs.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): All right, thanks. We've got some questions for you, let me let me go to those. Senator Kissel, you've been kicking us off, I saw your hand first, so, please.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hey, Mr. Luciano.

SAL LUCIANO: Hello, Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): I just wanted to say hi. We don't always agree on things philosophically, but we agree on a lot of things. And I just, I admire your compassion and your desire to make Connecticut a better state. I just wanted to let you know that.

SAL LUCIANO: Thank you, Senator, that's very generous and kind of you.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): No problem. Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you, Senator. Representative Ackert, please.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Luciano, for being here and your service to your members. I do have a question on your testimony. I'm in the trades myself, I find it different than the view that you have, in terms of hiring people right now, we seem to have a lack of professional trade individuals. You mentioned 30% in some fields, is that information that you can provide to us or is that something I can go on DOL and find that information as high as that in terms of the people that are unemployed right now?

SAL LUCIANO: You will-- So, there will be other building trades, specifically sheet metal workers and ironworkers and others, they're much closer to it and they can give you the specifics on how many unemployed there are in the different trades, and so I'd rather leave it to them, Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, absolutely, sir, and thank you. And good seeing you.

SAL LUCIANO: Thank you.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you, Representative.
Representative Winkler, please.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Yes. Hello Mr. Luciano.

SAL LUCIANO: Hello, Representative Winkler.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): I've been very impressed by the money behind this proposal. Four years ago, legislators around this country were offered a free convention, free room, free whatever, free entry, one of those national, legislative or government or whatever organizations, a big one. We're offered a free everything if they attended a lecture on this very Bill, on this very proposal.

And I was like, very impressed by the amount of money they were willing to pay to get me to go to just one-- I actually went to ethics to make sure it was ethical. But I was very impressed by the money they were going to spend to get us to go to this one-issue workshop. So, why are they investing this money? What do they get from it?

SAL LUCIANO: Just about all of the ALEC proposals are intended to reduce any kind of government regulation, anything that would help get them their largest bottom line that it's humanly possible. I know there's one funny story about a Representative who went to an ALEC conference, and as you said, it was in a real fancy place, et cetera. They came back, and they put in a cookie-cutter Bill that would make their state a right-to-work-state.

The interesting piece of it, though, was that the state was already a right-to-work state. So, yes, there's a significant amount of money and that's one of the problems with money in politics, where there is a press to put money and profit ahead of the safety of workers and the good of the community.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you, Representative. I'm looking to see if there's other questions for you, Mr. Luciano. I do not see any, thank you for your testimony. It's good to see you, I think we're probably better served from this Committee with a team focused on the labor union doesn't have to see you, but we appreciate you spending some time with the General Law Committee this afternoon. Thank you.

SAL LUCIANO: Thank you, and thank you for all that you do.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

SAMUEL CLARK: Up next is, Kimberly Glassman.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): There you are.

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: Good afternoon.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Good afternoon. We got video and audio.

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: Thank you. Chairman Maroney, Chairman D'Agostino, I have Ranking Member Rutigliano here, Ranking Member Witkos, distinguished Members of the General Law Committee, my name is Kimberly Glassman, I'm the Director of the foundation for Fair Contracting of Connecticut.

We are a labor-management, nonprofit organization that has been in Connecticut since 1994. We monitor government contracts. So those are federal, state, municipal contracts for compliance with federal and state labor law. We particularly focus on prevailing wage issues, wage theft issues.

And so, I am here today to testify in opposition to House Bill 6445. My written testimony has already been submitted and it is online so I'm not going to

read verbatim my written testimony, but certainly happy to answer any questions about my written testimony.

I wanted to take the short time that I have to address some of the statements that were made by the Administration and proponents of the Bill earlier in this public hearing. For starters, I did wanna just speak to Commissioner Seagull's description of this process that's in place currently, in order to review and approve or deny applications to sit for licensure.

Recognizing some of the constraints that the state has with regard to the North Carolina Dental Case, what the Commissioner has done, and this was through a lot of discussion with the stakeholders, many of which are going to be testifying later today, but through those discussions, the Commissioner started a new process where there would be a member of an occupational licensing board from one of the chapter 393, construction-related occupational licensing boards, a member of DCP's their licensing staff, and also the Director of the Department of Labor, Office of apprenticeship training.

What we asked the Commissioner to do was to open this up to the entire board. The board is made up of both contractors, labor representatives, members of the public, union, and non-union. So, everybody has a different expertise and can offer a different expertise in the reviewing of these applications. One person, one Chair, may not understand all of the facets that-- of all of the licenses that are overseen by that licensing board. And the Commissioner refused to allow that.

Basically, what the Commissioner said is that she was only gonna let one person from every occupational licensing board sit with the staff member of DCP and the Director of the Office of apprenticeship, and if that person-- technically the

Chair of the board wasn't going to be available, they could have somebody sitting on their behalf.

But that means that all of these other members of the board who are appointed by the Administration, or have been appointed by previous Administration, are denied the ability to review these applications and have that discussion back and forth with the agency and with the Department of Labor and discuss whether or not it wasn't appropriate to approve that person to sit for the license.

SAMUEL CLARK: Excuse me, Ms. Glassman, we're past three-minute marker.

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: Oh, my gosh, I have so many more points. But I just wanna mention also, that the elevator constructor license, because I know Senator Osten has brought up the elevator a few times and I know that folks have recognized and I appreciate how dangerous that trade is, in particular, that we believe all of the trades are dangerous. They have not been invited to participate in this process at all.

So, we have-- while we're discussing, is there an opportunity here, we wanna make sure you understand that the current process we have concerns with. So even if we said, "Hey, let's codify this current process," that's not a panacea here. And I think we still have some serious concerns with the Bill. But in the interest of time-- I hope that I'm given an opportunity for some questions to continue this discussion, but in the interest of time, I will cut my statements short.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): There are several for you. I do wanna just kick off and follow up on that last point, Kim. Look, I'm hoping everybody is kind of opened to some compromise here. And I'm not quite feeling that from the trades yet, but there's more discussion from them, I put some things out there from-- to the Administration, that seems to be--

that were not rejected out of hand and ask you guys to keep an open mind as well.

So, on this point of trying to-- so I'll be trying to make, maybe, some clarification for that process, I hear you, and maybe what we can do is work on some language to more involve the trades in that review. I think, what I know I'm gonna hear on that point, I'd like your reaction to really quick, though is, I think there would need to be a time limit on that, and so are you open to, look if we said, "Okay, we're gonna allow you or each board and their designees to weigh in on particular applications, being able to do that in 30 days, 40 days," cause if it's sitting out there for 90, 180 or longer, it's a de facto, rejection.

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: Look, sir, I don't serve on any of these occupational licensing boards and I certainly wouldn't wanna speak on behalf of all of the boards, because again, my organization's affiliates are only the-- when it comes to the licensed trades, we only represent both certain a number of signatory contractor associations and labor organizations and so we don't represent some of the open shop contractors or members of the public who sit on these boards.

So, I am not able to speak on behalf of the boards. But I think that that is a very-- I think that that is a reasonable request, and I think that currently already happens. I don't know the exact process, but these folks-- these three folks are sitting at a table and reviewing these applications together and discussing their experience, they're on-the-job experience, they're in-classroom experience and they're deciding together, "Hey, does this person-- is this person okay to go sit for the exam today? Do we need to tell them 'hey, you just need to make up 150 hours here and then you can come sit for the exam?'" I think that discussion happens.

I just think it would be even better, and I think it would be more helpful to the public if that were the case, and that we are looking at this process. And I'm certainly not advocating that, even if we codified this process that we will be supporting this legislation. But if we did that, I would assume it would work essentially the same way. But you would have more voices at the table who were looking at this application, and able to weigh in with their expertise too. And it may not be apples to apples, right? Of course, there may be some board members who are like, that's not my area of work, I'm gonna defer to others," and that's perfectly fine, too. But they should at least just have the opportunity.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): And I'm not disagreeing with that, I'm just saying, if we provide that opportunity in statute, I do think that has to be cabined in some method, because we don't want somebody to just get lost in just delay, quite frankly, but I hear you. I also, I do agree with your point on the elevators, I know they've butted heads with DCP before, I'd like to see that resolved, because it is the most dangerous profession that there is, and there's a long history with elevator manufacturer and service based in Connecticut. So, I do think it's important to put them on the table. You've got some questions here. Let me go to Senator Witkos, our Ranking Republican member, please.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad I could jump back in from another meeting, Kimberly, to hear your testimony. I gotta say I was shocked when I read your testimony, specifically your first paragraph. To me, I think that, honestly, it's fear-mongering when you said that, "If this Bill passes, it's gonna result in workplace injuries and dilution of safety and apprenticeship standards." And you don't even go into how you feel that and why that would happen.

So, I'm a little disappointed in that sentence being put into your testimony. But another section of your testimony, you speak of, "That there were 1188 state applicants that went through the construction-related occupational licensing, and so why does the Bill need to fix that?" Well, I guess I would turn the question on to you, if we're only talking about 1188, why are we making such a big deal about removing some barriers that the administration says are in place potentially, and these are for applicants, not necessarily people that may be looking towards working in the trades here in Connecticut?

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: Thank you, Senator Witkos, and I appreciate the question. I certainly didn't feel like my statement was fear-mongering, in fact, if you looked through my testimony, on the third page, I did reference a study that I included in my written testimony, it's-- I think it's probably the last enclosure with my testimony, it's a study that was conducted in September of 2020, so just a few months ago, and what this study looked at were the most dangerous jobs in the nation.

They listed the 25 most dangerous jobs in the country, half of which are just 12 of which, so just about half of which are in the construction industry. So, we do believe this is an issue of public safety. And also, I-- and you're right, I didn't, to your credit, there is a point that I did not include in my testimony that I do think is important here. The way DCP handles the applications now, is if you have come through "a gold star program," and that is the semantics that the agency uses for Connecticut-approved apprenticeship programs.

If you have completed a gold star, so a Connecticut-approved apprenticeship program, and that could be union or non-union, doesn't matter. If you can show that you have come through and completed a

Connecticut-approved apprenticeship program, you are automatically approved to sit for a licensing exam. That is the current process right now. So, this is-- what we believe is that if the state recognizes that our Connecticut-approved apprenticeship programs are the gold seal, are the gold star, you have to have your curriculum, you have to show your certifications that have to be reached, all your on-the-job hours, your in-classroom hours, you have to provide all of that to the state, to the Connecticut Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship and Training and then they approve your apprenticeship program in-- as a Connecticut-approved apprenticeship program.

And DCP talks to DOL all the time, they have that relationship, so if DCP recognizes that these apprenticeship programs are a gold star-approved apprenticeship program and if you've come through them, they don't even have to determine what's your experience, what's your qualifications, they trust that you have been trained properly and you are a skill-- you're skilled in this particular trade. And our concern is that it is actually undermining our apprenticeship programs. If we're not making sure that folks are vetted properly.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Oh, I guess that's where, I guess, we'll agree to disagree that we're just saying that if you don't go through Connecticut's program then you're not as qualified as people that have gone through Connecticut's program. But we were okay with the language that said, "If your training programs equal to or better than Connecticut's, then then you're okay." I'm aware of my former professional in law enforcement. We could-- we would hire people from another state and they wouldn't have to spend six months in the police academy.

They would just go to pick up the Connecticut General Statutes and anything that's specific to Connecticut that they may not be aware of, because they've got the necessary skills that are transient

across all state lines. And I think, for the most part, a lot of the-- if it's not a national program, then the method of building something or putting something together would generally be the same and that's why I asked, Mr. Dach there to make sure for the test, if there's anything specific to Connecticut building codes and standards that they be included, that they may not have gotten that training in another manner. And your testimony. You talked about the military program that we already have existing in the state and I think-- What was called?

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: It's Helmets to Hardhats. It's a national program, not just Connecticut.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): But this one is-- this language speaks to the spouses of military folks. Are you opposed to that? That their licenses allow to--

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: I think I feel comfortable saying that we're opposed to straight reciprocity across the board. Where it comes-- and I understand that this Bill is specific to military spouses, we have-- the building trades and you will hear from trades folks later on, they have a program called Helmets to Hardhats.

Just very quickly, I know that's not your question, but I just wanted to address this very quickly. It is a national program that was founded in, I think, 2003 or 2005. And it has provided already tens of thousands of careers to our returned Service Members throughout this country. And it gives them direct entry into a union when they come home, and direct entry into a construction trade union with access to good-paying jobs, health insurance for them and their families, secure retirement benefits, and it is a very, very successful program.

On top of Helmets to Hardhats, a lot of the building trade unions have individual programs, under the

Helmets to Hardhats umbrella that they-- that are tailored specifically to their trade. And some of these programs will actually go on to military bases or are housed on military bases. I think the UA, the plumbers and pipefitters, their program is housed on nine different military bases where they will train active member, active-duty members so once they finish--

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Could I just ask you there, Kimberly? Well, let me just ask this. I think it's great that they're doing that, but don't you think those are the individual trades doing that, but don't you think the state should be a leader in setting policies that say, "We recognize your efforts, veterans, and we're going to what we can to make sure that you carry forward your training and licensing and the military here to the private sector."

But yet you recognize that, and kudos to the folks for that that program, but say, we're flat out against any reciprocity, other than, "military, active military." Have you ever done any polling of your members that might have moved to another state and had to start all over again, with their training programs in other state, or do they say, they were happy that their Connecticut license was recognized in another state?

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: I have no pulling of that. I don't have the answers to that. What I will say, though, is what Mr. Dach-- every time that he made a-- every time and he's done this-- we've been talking to the Administration for well over a year, right? This Bill, a different iteration of this Bill was before your Committee last year, as well. So, it's not like we haven't been speaking with the Administration about these concerns and about what they're trying to achieve. Every single time that Mr. Dach gives an example, and he did it on the on the call today, he keeps talking about barbers.

And I am not denigrating barbers, because I get my hair done, we all get our hair done, they are necessary to our society, they provide a service to all of us, and we are very grateful for them, but you cannot-- What's frustrating is that he keeps using barbers as an example. And you cannot compare the occupations housed in Chapter 393 with that of a barber, they are not apples to apples.

And I think that that's where the offense on the industry side comes from, is that, it's one thing to just come before you guys and say, "Hey, I don't necessarily think that we should have licensure, or we-- I think we shouldn't have reciprocity for barbers because if you know that style and cut hair properly in one state, you likely know how to do it next door. But you're gonna hear from folks that that's just not the case with construction.

And we've heard it already with building codes, you're gonna hear some horror stories, you're gonna hear about the young man's life that was lost just so tragically over the Fall, at the VAN West Haven, and how easily that could have been avoided if the person who was working beside him understood their craft very well and understood how to handle those steam valves properly.

You're gonna hear about the lives lost at clean energy of 10 years ago. And I think we just need to be very mindful that we can't compare-- we can't put all of these licenses that are housed within DCP or any other agency in the same pool together. I think we have to be really meaningful and we have to--

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Are you dimming testimony when you said to me, "In general, we're against reciprocity."?

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: On Chapter 393. I can only speak about my industry, excuse me, let me-- I wanted to be very clear about that. I can only speak about my industry. I cannot speak about any other industry.

Chapter 393, ultimately, we don't think it is appropriate for Chapter 393 licenses to be included in this Bill.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): I just wanna ask you a question that well, and ask the question then I'll make the point as to why I asked the question. Sometimes when you're around a whole bunch of people and you start talking and they say, "Well, where you're from?" "I'm from Connecticut." "How long have you lived here?" "I lived here for 40 years." "Oh, you're a newbie." That's almost what, to me, it sounds like unless you were born here and raised here throughout your entire life-- I'm getting to the point where I'm saying with the, your licensing, then you don't count, you're not as good as the people that were here their entire life or got everything here in Connecticut.

And I just have a-- you haven't convinced me yet that somebody who was practicing a trade 10 years, whatever the number is, I know the Bill says one, but say any number, if we're talking compromise or trying to work out a solution that we're saying, "You're not qualified, you have to come before our standard board in order to get the blessing to be able to sit down and take an exam." I just like you to comment on that.

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: Well, I appreciate that. The Bill-- to your point that Bill doesn't say 10 years, the Bill does say one, and we have to go off of the language that's in front of us.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Yeah, but our Chairman offered something, in his testimony a question at the beginning to the Governor's office and asked to consider, and he said that, as the trades come up to testify, he would ask them to consider also, So, that's why. The Bill as it is, is not JF'd out to this Committee as you know, there's always JFS language so this is a time for us to try to get some input, to see if there's any way we can move a Bill

forward. But if folks just say, "Well, it's not in the Bill, I'm not testifying anything that's not in the Bill," then you really don't give us an opportunity--

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: No, no, I appreciate that. That's a good point, that's a good point. Look, I can't sit here right now without having all of the affiliates of this organization, the stakeholders who perform this work, who train folks on how to perform this work without them being involved in that discussion. I'm not prepared here today to start negotiating on their behalf. What I will say is that, I am also not from Connecticut, originally, I was not born or raised in this state, but it is my home.

And I feel very-- I feel a strong sense of loyalty to my state. This is where I'm going to grow old, and I think we have a lot of folks throughout, in the trades, who have similar stories, who aren't necessarily born and bred in Connecticut, but this is their home. What we're seeing though, is the flip side of that, we're seeing that there's such high unemployment in the Connecticut construction industry, which is not what we're talking about here today.

But I think I would have a lot of sympathy from folks on this call that will agree that the state is simply just not making the investments into our local economy that we need to make to create good paying construction jobs and so, we have high rates of unemployment. And what you're gonna hear from some of the trades is that they're losing Members to other states right now, where there is economic activity, where they are building realms, you see those cranes up in the air. And so, we are worried, frankly, about the high rates of unemployment in the construction --

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): A lot of those things-- I mean, I know, I don't wanna do the-- have the debate

now, because we could be talking about PLAs, we could be talking about prevailing wage for municipal jobs, that they're just not going there because they say it's just too costly to do these things. So, there's a lot of contributing factors, I think, when we talk about unemployment and jobs going to out-of-state companies, which is, to me, it's shameful that our state would contract with out-of-state companies to do work that we have companies in Connecticut that could do the same work.

And I know Senator Osten is always making those comments that she believes we have some very highly qualified companies in Connecticut that should be doing Connecticut government work, but for a variety of reasons we can't get our companies to put in some RFPs for, or put in some proposals or bids for the job.

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: Senator Witkos, I don't wanna cut you off, but maybe there's-- I do have a question that I wish was asked to the Administration, maybe one of you on this Committee would be able to get this information. I'm not an attorney, and before I ask and I also wanna say really quickly, although we aren't talking about project labor agreements or prevailing wage, a lot of the workforce we're losing out to our surrounding states that have even stronger worker protections and even stronger prevailing wage laws on the books than we do in Connecticut.

But the question that I wish we had had a chance to hear from the Administration is, it looks to me, and again, I'm not a lawyer, so forgive me if I'm wrong, that the language is limited to workers who hold a license. What about the contractor's license? Does this apply to contractors' licenses? And here's my concern, to your point, Senator Witkos, is that if we're saying you have to prove residency, and the Bill does not suggest how that would be enforced, by the way, and I brought that up to the Administration and they were like, "Oh, that's a good point, we'll

look into it," and then they never-- we never heard anything, but you have to prove residency in order to apply-- in order to sit for licensing exam and be-- and attain licensure in Connecticut. Our concern, and from the construction world, is that's great for the workforce but what about the contractor? Is the contractor gonna be held to the same standard?

If we have an out-of-state contractor who comes into Connecticut, are they gonna have to prove residency? Does that company then also have to relocate to Connecticut? I think that would be a really good question, and I think that would be, definitely helpful to us. And I'll do my due diligence to reach out to the Administration on that myself, but I hope that you guys can answer that.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Thank you for that question. We have our nonpartisan staff on with us today so we're certainly gonna-- I'd like to hear an answer to that question as well 'cause I think that that's important for us to make sure that we understand the Bill in its entirety in order for us to move forward. But that's all the questions I have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Great. Thank you, Senator Witkos. I see Representative Winkler has his hand raised, so if you'd like to proceed with your question?

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Thank you. So, this is a serious Bill and by that, I mean, the Governor has contacted the agencies about it, made it a key part of his legislative proposals, it's obviously gained very serious consideration here. So, I don't wanna drag you outside your comfort zone, but if this Bill is going to pass, so to speak, or some version of it might pass, what changes would you like to see that would be beneficial from your perspective?

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: Thank you for the question, Representative Winkler. Ultimately, I think that Chapter 393 should be excluded from this legislation. If-- and I don't have a chat, there's a chat box here, it's not like regular zoom, but there's-- I have a link to all of the occupational licenses housed within DCP, there's people who make beds, there's bakers, there's-- again, these are all incredibly important occupations, and I'm not denigrating them by any stretch of the imagination, nor am I speaking for those industries.

But these are industries where the likelihood of on-the-job injuries or on-the-job, God forbid, fatalities are extremely low, if not completely, they don't exist at all. And you can't-- I just don't think we can look at this as an omnibus piece of legislation, where we're comparing some of these occupations in the exact same way as to folks who are wiring a building or installing pipe that carries gas.

Some of these professions are extremely dangerous, and they're not just dangerous to the general public, should something go wrong, they're dangerous, also, to the people who are performing the work. And if they're not properly trained, or if they're working beside somebody who's not been properly trained, we could have serious consequences here. And so, I just, I think it's really important that we consider just removing Chapter 393 from the Bill. Thank you.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Representative Winkler. Representative Ackert, I believe your hand is raised.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Mr., Chairman. And thank you, Ms. Glassman, for being here and your knowledge of the process out there, I appreciate

that. Just two quick-- I wanna just go back on your comments about the process that Connecticut has here, developing people into the trades, you made some good comments regarding whether it's the union trades, apprenticeship program, or the other programs out there, and the value to those in the training of the individuals that come out of those. Do you include that, our state technical schools also for the high schools in that discussion?

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: I don't know how the opposite of apprenticeship and training-- I don't know how they classify those programs, so I really can't speak to that. I think that Todd Birch, who's the Director of Office of Apprenticeship and Training would probably be much better equipped to answer that question, I'm sorry.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): That is quite right. I just-- you were commenting about the value that we have of the apprenticeship programs in the State of Connecticut, whether it's a union shop, or the other trade shops. And I believe that the -- I know that Technical High Schools do a very good job on how they reflect on the-- when they come out, they essentially have the schooling done and they still have to do a portion of job that they need to do to complete their apprenticeship program. So, you think a process would be better under 393 to go through a state apprenticeship program, and then kind of be getting test and then be a state-licensed person?

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: Personally, I mean, look, I mean, I think that that's-- I mean, yes and no, right? I mean, yes, I think our apprenticeship programs in Connecticut are some of the best in the nation, but Senator Witkos did say like, "What are you saying, are you saying that no other apprenticeship program could be as good as Connecticut's?" I'm not trying to come off as a protectionist here, right?

I recognize that there may be other apprenticeship programs in the nation that are fantastic, that are great. And I'm not, certainly, not trying to undermine any other apprenticeship program in the country, but our construction-related apprenticeship programs were some of the first apprenticeship programs that this country founded almost 100 years ago and created through the construction trades to sort of train that next generation.

And they're really good at it, and they're good at what they do. And I think that they offer an incredible amount of expertise and knowledge, and so, to the extent that we can always be finding a way to incorporate our state-approved apprenticeship programs into these discussions about whether it's licensure or safety or working with our trade schools, which I know the building trades do a lot of working with the technical schools, then I think we should be doing that, right? I think that there's-- that helps everybody.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, again for being here and your answers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: Thank you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Representative Ackert. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to say I appreciate your passion and purpose regarding your testimony. I'm not against barbers, I actually need them really bad, soonest humanly possible. Probably the Chair will see me on Thursday with a super long hair. But construction is difficult and brutal, and your words ring out. And I just wanted to let you know that you're a good advocate for the people that you represent.

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: That's very kind, I appreciate that, Senator Kissel. And I just wanna also note that whether you're a union construction worker or

you're not, right? These folks are-- were deemed an essential workforce during this pandemic, they worked throughout this pandemic, they worked in all weather, they are out there, whether it's 10 degrees outside and the wind whipping at you, or if it's 95 degrees outside, and it feels like you're walking through a wall of humidity. And so, I just-- this is not the type of job where you're inside in a comfortable controlled environment at all times, and these workers-- I just wanna make sure that we're thinking about them with these decisions that we make here today.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): I think you make a great point. And it's like when I see the guy, the mail person, whether it's a woman or a man, like if it's a beautiful spring day I go, "That's a great job," but if it's a crummy, rainy, cold day, I go, "Man, I would not wanna be a mail person." So, I get it.

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: That's right. Thank you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Senator Kissel. Are there any other-- any further questions? If not, thank you very much for your testimony, Kim.

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Next up is, Jason Furman, I believe. Is he in the window? Or is he in the room, Mr. Clerk?

SAMUEL CLARK: Yes. And he's coming in now.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Great.

JASON FURMAN: Yeah, just brought into the room.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay, great. Please proceed, Professor Furman.

JASON FURMAN: Great. Thank you so much for including me in this hearing on HB 6445, legislation

that I think would expand opportunities, benefit workers and consumers, and help strengthen the economy of Connecticut. By way of background, I'm a Professor of the practice of economic policy at Harvard University, jointly in the Economics Department and at the Harvard Kennedy School.

I was Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers for President Obama, where I served as the President's Chief Economist and a member of his cabinet. In that job, I engaged and supervised a substantial amount of research on the importance of occupational licensing reform, an idea that the Obama Administration took on and pushed forward, including funding for legislation-- legislation for funding to support states as they reformed their occupational licensing systems.

Occupational licensing is appropriately done at the state level, it's not something the federal government does, or the federal government should do, because it involves a very delicate balance of the benefits of safety, consumer protection, and the costs it imposes in terms of benefiting licensed workers at the expense of unlicensed workers at the expense of consumers.

In many cases those costs falling on military spouses, immigrants, those with criminal records, and the like. I became especially interested and passionate about this issue, because research that we did, showing that the number of licensed occupations has grown from 5% in the 1950s to 25%. Two-thirds of that growth is an expansion in what professions have licenses as opposed to just a growth of licensed professions in traditional areas like law, and health care.

This growth of licensing has contributed to greater inequality, fewer opportunities for marginalized communities, and has reduced mobility and dynamism. Our research found that workers with an occupational license were much less likely to move between states

as compared to workers without a license, whereas their movements within states was similar.

And the time the Obama Administration came up with three recommendations for Occupational licensing, of which one of the main ones was expanding reciprocity, and doing greater harmonization of licensing, something that I was very pleased to see incorporated into HB 6445. I also think that the difficulty that those who have been in the criminal justice system have of getting reincorporated in the economy has extremely damaging effects, both on them and the economy more broadly, and this legislation would make further progress in that regard.

So, I wanna-- I think Connecticut has an opportunity to do something that a number of states are doing, it's a nationwide trend to move in this direction, I think it would benefit the State of Connecticut, benefit the United States of America and it's an important opportunity. So, thank you for the chance to testify on it.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you very much, Professor Furman. And I saw Representative Winkler's hand first followed by, Senator Witkos and then, Senator Kissel.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Thank you. One question, if I could, does everybody benefit? And by that, I mean, okay, so somebody has a license in the state, and has a good job and maybe doesn't wanna move, but it seems like every state thinks that people with trade skills will move into their states. Some states have to be the losers, don't they? And so, I've been told repeatedly that people won't move to Connecticut because of the taxes, and the property taxes, and income taxes, and the sales taxes. Now, suddenly, I'm being told that, if we just get rid of-- I'm sorry, if we just accept every state's license, then people will flock to Connecticut? What about the states they come from? Do they do they win?

JASON FURMAN: Right. So, Representative, that's a great question. If you only cared about Connecticut and didn't care about the rest of the country, what you might wanna do is force everyone else in the country to have really strict licensing rules, tell the rest of the country not to have reciprocity, and then pass something like HB 6445, and watch people flock to Connecticut. You, of course, I can say, do care about the country, as we all do, and more importantly, you only can control Connecticut. And so, I have no doubt that Connecticut would benefit. Conversely, I think Connecticut will be left behind if other states move in this direction and Connecticut doesn't.

The final thing I'd say is, I don't think everyone in this country-- and I was-- I've lived in Connecticut for two years cumulative of my life, two wonderful years, very attached to the state and have been adjacent to it much of my life. I don't think everyone in the country should live in any one state. To some degree, we want a system where people are matched to the best place for them, a place they like to be, a place where there's great jobs, and you wanna give them the opportune-- you wanna remove any impediment they would have to making Connecticut that choice.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): And do you deny that there are states that have a much-- I don't know how to put this, more cavalier or more old-boy-network or more lenient or how you'd express it, attitude towards qualifications, the attitude being, "Go learn on-the-job, who cares?" attitudes towards tests, attitude towards national certifications. I mean, is Connecticut-- I'll ask it the other way around, are there states where licensing is lax?

JASON FURMAN: Right. I have studied licenses of a number of different types, I think there are far, far more examples of over licensing than under licensing within the United States, and that's because the general political dynamic is the same

everywhere, which is the licenses benefit a concentrated group that holds it at the expense of a much larger group that is either their customers or others who wanted to have the job. So, in general, outside of certain things like medicine, and nothing here is gonna change any of that, I think we tend to see over licensing around the country, not under licensing.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): You're saying over licensing in terms of what the-- what gets licensed. I'm saying within a profession, for instance, we'll say elevator operator, which everybody keeps bringing up, let us say if you went around the state-- the country, you don't think you'd be able to predict what states might have easier requirements than harder requirements? There's no regional or other tendencies, in regards to the level of requirements required?

JASON FURMAN: There's some variation. What I'm saying is that variation in most occupations ranges from requirements that are strict enough to requirements that are too strict. And there aren't a lot where there are a lot of states that have requirements that are too lax in my judgment.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Okay. So, one of the things I looked up, one of the requirements was 400 hours, Connecticut's was 3000 hours, I think one of the decoders had 4000 hours, all for the same exact job. With your desc-- Would you say, without knowing the job, or even if you knew the job, how would you know if 400 hours or 3000 hours was more reasonable?

JASON FURMAN: This is all a balance of costs and benefits, and there are definitely costs and benefits on both sides. The ideal would be to have a process that does that in a relatively non-political way, that's not adjudicated by the beneficiaries of that licensing themselves. I think absent that, if you can't do that for each and every one of the occupations each and every one of which has

different rules, to adopt some form of reciprocity 'cause I don't think there's anywhere in the United States that is extremely reckless and extremely risky, that I'm aware of, in any occupation. I guess I just don't know the example of, in such and such state, there's lots of construction accidents because the rules are really lax. That's come down-- workplace safety has gotten much better and improved everywhere in the country in the last several decades.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): But even if we found that state, you wouldn't think the cause was licensing?

JASON FURMAN: Yeah, I'd wanna know what the cause was, I'd wanna look more carefully at it.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Representative Winkler. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Professor, for testifying today. You'd mentioned that there are both degrees of licensures, from very stringent to, maybe, not so stringent. And if through your course of research or study, where do you think Connecticut would fall in that spectrum?

JASON FURMAN: Connecticut is towards the upper end in the fraction of occupations that require licenses. I don't know a good measure of how intensive the requirements are for those occupations that is comparable across states, but in terms of the number of occupations, it's towards the upper end?

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): And do you believe-- obviously, you read the Bill, and so do you believe that knowing what the Bill contemplates that there

may be barriers to employment for folks coming from other states to Connecticut in order to work here?

JASON FURMAN: Yes. I believe that there currently are barriers in Connecticut to that.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): And do you believe that this Bill may address some of those barriers?

JASON FURMAN: Yes, I think this Bill would address those barriers, or some of those barriers.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): And do you believe in your research and studies that there may be a causal reaction for safety violations or workplace injuries if this would-- this Bill were to pass? Do you see any correlation between the two?

JASON FURMAN: I think that would be very minimal.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): And is your belief that--And I make, I'm asking you this is that any type of a workplace accident is generally investigated by authority, either CONN-OSHA or federal OSHA or the likes if there is a workplace accident?

JASON FURMAN: Yes. I mean, there's the process and there's also private rights of action in the case of workplace actions-- workplace accidents as well.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): And are you aware, through your research, has there ever been any finding of fault due to a licensure issue? I know Representative Winkler kinda asked along the same lines of any accident that has been reported?

JASON FURMAN: I'm not aware of any, but I don't wanna-- I'm not sure how deep my awareness of that question goes.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Okay, thank you. That's all the questions I have, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Professor.

JASON FURMAN: Thank you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Senator Witkos. Senator Kissel, followed by Senator Osten.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): All right, thank you, Chairman Maroney. Professor, this is not meant as sarcasm, it's actually a compliment. When did President Obama appoint you when you were 16 years old? 'Cause you look super young man.

JASON FURMAN: I'm not sure if that's because of sleep, but anyway, thank you.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): You're welcome. I appreciate all your commentaries. My son is waving against-- waving to me, he's going off to do something. No, I appreciate all your input regarding this, I think it's important. Your insights are invaluable. But you do look super young to be a Professor. That's just my-- now maybe that's because I'm getting super old, but I just wanted to let you know.

JASON FURMAN: Okay, well, thank you. That's the nicest thing I've heard today.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): You're welcome. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Senator Kissel. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you very much. I'm not gonna comment on age at all. So, Professor, I have a couple of questions and I really want some data. You posited that Connecticut is at the upper end of licensure and that directly impacted the number of people that would come here to work. Can you give me an outline of all of the states and where they stand in licensure by job classification, please? Because for you to make that blanket statement, it must mean that you have data to do that, so if you could send

that over to the Chairs of this Committee so that they could send it out, I'd really like to see that data. So, is that possible?

JASON FURMAN: Yeah, I can give you things like the percent of the workforce that's licensed the--

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So, I want by license itself. You have it by license in here that you wanna just make a blanket change by license. Do you have it by license itself?

JASON FURMAN: Some of those data are available, some of those aren't. But I'll send you what's available.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): All right. Because I don't know how we can change the law without the data. The other thing is, you said that you don't know that there's a causal relationship between licensure and workers' compensation issues, have you looked at the data available through either CONN-OSHA or federal OSHA so that we could look at that data and make that judgment? I'm certain that you're just not saying that as a matter of just, "Oh, gee!"

JASON FURMAN: No, I have not-- I looked at the federal data, the OSHA data related to workplace accidents and licensure. I've also--

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): By license?

JASON FURMAN: Studies for particular occupations. I have not looked at Connecticut-specific data on workplaces--

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): But this is a Connecticut-based law based on Connecticut issues so this is something that Connecticut-- that you're saying this change needs to be made in Connecticut, correctly?

JASON FURMAN: There's no concern with licenses and workplace accidents in the United States as a whole

than reciprocity for licenses from other states into Connecticut wouldn't and shouldn't create a concern for Connecticut. So, in some sense, actually, for this question, Senator, I think it's the national data that's the most relevant 'cause it'd be important--

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Can you get us the national data that you looked at and the state data that you looked at seeing as you're attempting to change licensure in Connecticut so that we could see that data and give it to the two Chairs so they can get it to us? Is that possible?

JASON FURMAN: I'll give you what data I have. Yeah.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Okay. And do you have any testimony from any worker who has attempted to come to Connecticut, and said, I can't because my license in OshKosh B'gosh not picking on any particular state is not relevant in Connecticut. Do you have that information in some place? Because you've said that a number of times, I was thinking you must have scads and scads and scads of testimony saying, "I can't get a job in Connecticut."

JASON FURMAN: So, in research we did at the Council of Economic Advisers, we found that the difference in the migration rate of workers between the most and least licensed occupations within the state was a very small difference, about two percentage points. Between states, it was a very large difference, something like 14 percentage points. So, the statistical analysis makes it very clear that mobility between states is very different, depending on whether you have a license or not. I don't have any reason to think that Connecticut would be an exception to that statistical finding, which is quite large and robust for all states in the United States aggregated together.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): So, I don't wanna interrupt you, please excuse me if I do, but so you have no

testimony from anybody that said they wanna come to Connecticut, and they couldn't come because of a license? There is no testimony?

JASON FURMAN: I haven't--

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): You're using pi levels statistics out of the School of Harvard, saying that this is what blue-collar workers are all about and this is how we can tell that because we're interested in bringing the wages down of workers or we're interested in bringing the benefits down. We want them to get paid what they get paid in another state that has a lower cost of living. I don't know what data you're looking at, because you haven't given me any.

One more question and-- 'cause I don't wanna, sort of, continue or belabor this issue. But I just don't-- have you looked at the number of jobs? Because I talk to the trades all the time, my part of the state has a lot of blue-collar workers, that's what we have here. We do blue-collar work, we're often thought of as that Eastern Connecticut, we don't wanna take care of them because it's only-- there a bunch of hicks out there and we're not paying attention to them. Yeah, I have-- and we have a lot of great jobs, we're very happy with the jobs we have here, we have electric boat, we have the two gaming institutions, we have a lot of jobs relative to manufacturing and we're very happy to do the work that's out here.

However, I find that many people that are in your position think that you can tell us how to live our lives and I'm not really certain that that's true. And I just, I guess I take offense to you telling us what it takes to be a good plumber or and a good electrician or a good sheet metal worker, or any of the other work that's out here. And that you wanna change the licensure without having any data on that, yet you have not come to me and said, or any of us here, I don't mean me, in particular, or any

of us and said, "Hey, listen, I have a way to bring in 1500 jobs down here in Eastern Connecticut that will give work to people." Because I have tradesmen looking for work here in Connecticut that live here in Connecticut because there's not enough jobs, you have not been successful as an Administration to bring tolls into the area, which would have given jobs to the trades, you have not been successful at coming up with an agreement with the two tribal nations.

Six thousand jobs that I'm -- that I've lost down there. You have not come up with the jobs relative to manufacturing when we talk about the manufacturing pipeline that was developed here in Eastern Connecticut without the help of anybody who has a Harvard degree telling us what the statistics are. So, I would like you to come to me and show me the jobs that you're trying to bring here into Connecticut and where they're going to work. Because we're still waiting for people to understand that that's why I wrote a letter to a Congressman DeLauro asking her to earmark some projects in Eastern Connecticut so that the tradespeople can have jobs to go to, to use their skills, yet you wanna bring more people here without first doing the jobs component of it.

So, I would really appreciate if you could bring me the data that supports this piece of legislation, so that I can get the people in Eastern Connecticut and the rest of the state to have these very good jobs and work on projects. Do a WPA, it's gonna take bonding, that's what it takes to bond on a lot of these projects so we can get people back to work.

I've been begging for someone to come down here with the American Job Centers, they finally opened them up after a year. So, I think that that's very frustrating to me. I have a hard time with this Bill because all I hear is-- from you is some think tank decided how blue-collar workers were gonna work and I haven't yet to see a think tank come up with work.

So, I apologize if I was a little harsh on you, I hope I wasn't, I don't mean to be hard. But I want jobs, that's what I want. And that's the kind of legislation that I put into so that we can have jobs. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

JASON FURMAN: Senator, could I say one word or if you'd rather I not, that's fine.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): You can say however many words, you've been saying a lot of words that have been relative to someone who is any economist telling me how to get jobs when I can tell you what I need, really need is, I need to build the sewer system in Norwich, which is \$200 million, and I need resources for that. And it costs the same to build the road in Eastern Connecticut as it does in Greenwich, but when they raise their mill right down there in Greenwich, they get \$33 million, when I raise a mill rate in spring, I get 170,000.

It still cost a million too to build the road that I'm trying to fix. So, it's that lack of understanding that there needs to be dollars put in to build infrastructure to provide jobs. If you wanna give us the green light that we're gonna build things in Eastern Connecticut, and across the state, and in this nation. We're gonna start rebuilding our infrastructure, I'll talk to you about licensing then, when all those jobs are flooding the area. You can say whatever you want, that's up to the Chair, not me. Thank you.

JASON FURMAN: So just super briefly, Senator, thank you for those comments. I think a lot more needs to be done for jobs than just the licensing discussion we're having today. I think infrastructure is an important part of that. I think these types of licensing reforms are a complement to those other efforts on jobs. The points I've made aren't just based on abstract statistical analysis; I think they're reasonably common sets. If you make someone have to do a couple 100 hours of something in order

to work in the state, when they were able to work in another state without doing that, they're going to be less likely to move to your state.

It's gonna drive up the cost of that in your state, it's gonna exclude opportunities in your state. So, I think there's a lot of common sense to this. I think there's a more difficult question of how you get the balance right between the different objectives you want. And I certainly-- that is gonna be your prerogative and I hope you do talk to workers, to businesses, to economists, like myself. Use your own judgment. I'm sure that's exactly what you're doing. I would never suggest you just rely, solely on statistical analysis, let alone from one person coming to you from the City of Cambridge [Inaudible]. But I do think that's certainly one thing that hopefully you'll find useful. Thank you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Professor. Are there any other questions? If not, I have a comment and then a question. My comment is that Senator Kissel has never told me I look young so apparently, being in the legislature ages you significantly, but then I'll go on. We had heard previous comments to the effect that this legislation has come from ALEC, and you're from the Obama administration so I'm assuming you didn't work together with ALEC on the legislation. So, it appears that it is across the political spectrum that people are looking at this idea of licensure reciprocity, is that safe to say?

JASON FURMAN: Yeah, it's from across the political spectrum in our Administration, it came from people who were concerned about inequality, it came from people who are very focused on military spouses, it came from people who are focused on criminal justice reform, there are a number of different streams that all converged on to this issue.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Can you comment a little more on the inequality? I know I've heard one example in terms of a military spouse coming here,

whereas another base they were an aesthetician or they worked on nails but then when they came here, they may need a license, right? For that, something that they had done somewhere else. But can you give-- can you-- you've talked about the inequality and barriers, how does this help reduce by offering reciprocity, reduce those barriers?

JASON FURMAN: Yeah. Because it reduces a large cost that people need to pay. And some people are able to pay this cost, often ones that come from somewhat more advantage going into it, others can't pay the cost for the number of hours, the cost of the course, certificate, whatever it is they need, and they end up not able to work in that occupation and have lower wages as a result of it.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): And so, I think one thing we've also heard before was even in the costs of background checks, or fingerprint aid, or whatever the case may be. In terms of other states-- in this Bill, this version of the Bill, we don't look at requiring substantially similar training. Are you familiar-- we've heard that that's one of the trends in recent states, but I think if one of the concerns is safety, are you aware of states that have kept that in there? Their substantially similar training requirement?

JASON FURMAN: I'm not sure, sorry.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay. Now, the other thing, I guess, well, and actually, this question probably isn't appropriate for you so I'll save it for someone else, but thank-- if there are no other questions, Professor Furman, thank you very much for your time.

JASON FURMAN: Okay. Well, thank you for including me and for your work and seriousness on this topic.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you. Okay. Next, Mr. Clerk is, Ashley Zane. Is Ashley in the room?

SAMUEL CLARK: Ashley is coming in now.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay, thank you.

ASHLEY ZANE: Does everybody hear me?

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Yes, we can hear you.
Please proceed, Ms. Zane.

ASHLEY ZANE: Great. So, good evening, Chairs Maroney, D'Agostino and Ranking Members Rutigliano and Witkos. My name is Ashley Zane, I'm a government affairs associate with the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. We represent thousands of businesses across the state, both large and small, and across various sectors.

So, we are here in support of HB 6445, an act expanding economic opportunity in occupations licensed by DCP. This policy aligns with CBIA's rebuild Connecticut policy pledge, as it focuses on streamlining professional licensing processes and allowing people to sit for exams assuming they've met certain criteria. Within this Bill, we strongly support the inclusion of military spouses. 90% of these are women and a third of this demographic is working in a licensed profession. Allowing portability of licenses for this group would make Connecticut more attractive when looking to transfer bases.

These families often move once every three years and if Connecticut is unpredictable, especially in these fields, they might take an unemployment gap and not work and not add to our state's coffers. So, we're also seeing additional migration into our state and a confusing or unpredictable process shouldn't be one of the reasons why they don't come to Connecticut. We do support the ability for the Commissioner to reject licenses that aren't in the best interest of safety or public health of our residents, because we do have a high-quality

workforce, and we should be protecting that at all costs.

With that said, we also urge the Department, when they are creating these tests, to work with the industry. They are the experts, they know what competencies need to be met to ensure that our state is safe, and our state can thrive. So, with that, I'm more than happy to answer any questions you have, and thank you for your time today. Oh, I think you're on mute.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Yeah. Thank you very much. Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, Ashley, thank you for being here, appreciate your testimony and the work that you guys do. A few of the testimonies I've heard about high unemployment rates in the State of Connecticut and in certain trades, and I'm not sure which ones they are, in your memberships, is it that you have high unemployment rates or are you guys actually looking - your members looking for workers that aren't there?

ASHLEY ZANE: So many of our industries, we represent a lot of bioscience manufacturing, we do the trades as well. So, they have been asking for additional workers, however, with the trade organizations, with tourism, and those industries, we have been seeing a decline because of COVID. So, it is a mixed bag between our membership.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you for that answer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Great, thank you. Representative Winkler.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): I am sorry, Mr. Chair, I did not take my hand down.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay, thank you. Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Hi, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I'm on. I think you did a great job in your presentation. I haven't seen you before and I appreciate you coming out before us, and you did a great job.

ASHLEY ZANE: Thank you, first time in the General Law Committee. So, thank you for hearing my testimony.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): You're welcome. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Senator Kissel. Are there any further questions? If not, thank you very much for your testimony.

ASHLEY ZANE: Thank you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay. Next is, Kelly Moore, I believe. Samuel, are you letting Ms. Moore into--

SAMUEL CLARK: Yeah.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay, great. I think you're muted.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): And by the way, Mr. Chairman, you look extremely young.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): It's too late.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Just wanna let you know.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you. It doesn't appear to me that you're muted, but I can't hear you speaking. You almost had it a second ago.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): I don't think she has a microphone on her computer.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): I think that when she switched from our headphones, she has to unplug our headphones from the computer.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Yep. I was thinking the same thing, Cath.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): For old people, we're becoming experts at this.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): And I don't know why you're saying-- I don't know if you're saying Senator Witkos is old or me. I won't even ask.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Hey, I'll have to wait 'cause Kissel is gonna throw us a compliment any minute now.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Definitely not you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): They'll be much safer there.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): You're all super young,

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): I know I'm older than you, Senator Witkos, so.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): You're all super young.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Mr. Clerk, are you letting go back into the room?

REP. RUTIGLIANO (123RD): I'm pretty sure she was-- He was talking about Ackert.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Here she is, she's coming in again.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay. Yeah, and it's connecting to the audio now, so.

KELLY MOORE: Okay.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): That works, yes.

KELLY MOORE: Okay, great.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Please proceed.

KELLY MOORE: Apologies. All right, thanks for the patience. Senator Maroney, Representative D'Agostino, Ranking Members, Witkos, and Cheeseman, distinguished Members of the Committee. My name is Kelly Moore. I'm the interim Senior Policy Counsel for the ACLU of Connecticut, and I'm here to testify in support of House Bill 6445, AN ACT EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN LICENSED OCCUPATIONS.

I just wanna make really clear that I'm here to talk about Sections 2 and 3 of this Bill, which are the Sections different from what we've talked about today for most of the day. We're not taking a position on either of those Sections. And they-- I just wanna also make really clear that they do a little bit of a different thing. These provisions are for people who live in Connecticut with criminal records who wanna go through Connecticut's own licensure process.

Currently, there's over 550 barriers to full civic participation by people with criminal records, many of which are employment restrictions, and licensure restrictions are a major subset of those. This is incredibly counterproductive because the evidence shows that when people who are living with a criminal record are given a fair chance to earn a job, recidivism is reduced and communities are healthier. In fact, one of the nation's largest employers, the US Military has found that enlistees with felony records are more likely to be promoted to sergeant than those with no conviction history.

Existing Connecticut laws seem to provide a clear path for granting licenses to individuals with criminal records by requiring the state to conduct specific individualized assessments before granting or denying a license. But there are dozens and dozens of carve outs throughout the statutes. One type of statutory carve out provides some licenses can only be issued on a showing of good moral character.

Section 2A of the Bill eliminates any requirement to demonstrate good moral character to the Commissioner of consumer protection. This is an excellent change to the existing law because the good moral requirement--good moral character requirement is subjective and can be exercised in a way that perpetuates the decision-makers' biases. It also serves as a chill upon people with criminal records who are otherwise qualified to apply for and receive professional licensure.

Section 3 is also a good Section in the Bill. It directs agencies with responsibility for issuing licenses to take stock of the current background check processes, and report on the feasibility of establishing a pre-clearance assessment. But we firmly believe that criminal records should not pose a barrier unless an individualized assessment has been conducted.

We recognize that the lived reality for people with records is that the uncertainty creates a chill. We've heard many times that people are afraid to sink money into training and education because they fear being unable to obtain a license. The pre-clearance assessment would meet people where they are, giving people living with criminal records confidence to seek training and pursue careers. So, this is a great intermediate step.

And I just wanna finally flag Section QC of this Bill. It provides the Commissioner of Consumer Protection can grant or deny a license but also

offers a third option of issuing a consent order, which seems to be a way for the commissioner to issue a license subject to conditions. Details are lacking on what a consent order is, under what authority it's issued, what conditions may be imposed.

And we're just concerned that this might allow a future Commissioner to impose burdensome, irrational conditions that don't benefit public safety. We believe people involved in our justice system, who finished their sentences and paid their debts to society, they should be-- have equal opportunity to contribute to society and hold successful and fulfilling careers. This Bill is an important step forward and we urge this Committee to move Sections 2 and 3 forward. Thanks.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you very much. Are there any questions? Seeing no questions, thank you for your testimony, you did a great job. And got it in right on your time. So, thank you. Okay, next, Jason Guyot.

SAMUEL CLARK: He's coming in now.

JASON GUYOT: Hi, good afternoon.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Good afternoon. Please proceed with your testimony. Mr. Guyot.

JASON GUYOT: Thank you very much, Senator Maroney, Representatives D'Agostino, Senator Witkos, and Representative Rutigliano, and Members of the General Law Committee. My name is Jason Guyot, I'm a proud Member of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and I currently serve as the interim President, CEO, and senior Vice President of resort operations at Foxwoods Resort Casino. I appear before you today in support of House Bill 6460, AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF EXTENDING ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR SERVICE HOURS TO GAMING AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS.

We are grateful for the opportunity to support the proposed Bill because it's a critical step towards achieving greater parity and economic competitiveness for Connecticut's vibrant entertainment venues located on our tribal land at Foxwoods Resort Casino. As a full-service resort that caters to both domestic and international clientele, Foxwoods Resort Casino aggressively competes with gaming facilities in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania for the very same clientele. With the advent of expanded gaming competition just to our north in Massachusetts, we once again find ourselves at a competitive disadvantage because of Connecticut's historically narrow liquor service laws.

In 2018, Massachusetts recognized the importance of its entertainment venues to the health of its economy and acted to extend liquor service to 4am. As you are acutely aware, the entertainment and gaming industries are laser-focused not only on their clientele safe enjoyment of their venues, but also on the perceived weaknesses of their competition. The success and vibrancy of Foxwoods Resort Casino and Mohegan Sun are just as important to the residents of Connecticut as they are to our tribal members because of our respective agreements with the state.

The January consensus revenue estimates rely upon 232.3 million and 232.6 million from Indian gaming payments to fund the state budget in fiscal years 2021 and 2022, respectively. From that time those agreements were executed between our nations and the State of Connecticut, our slot arrangements have yielded almost \$8 Billion.

While extending liquor service hours to 24 would be optimal, we firmly believe that extending liquor service hours to 4am will increase our slot revenue with the state. We've said this before, our success is your success. We respectfully request that you

advance House Bill 6460 to support all of Connecticut's entertainment venues, health and success by extending liquor service hours to 4am. I thank you for your time today and the opportunity to speak.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Great. Thank you, Mr. Guyot. Senator Witkos and then, Senator Osten.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And good afternoon, Jason, thanks for coming and testifying today. I don't know if you were on at the beginning when I was questioning Commissioner Seagull about this particular Bill. To me-- I don't know why when you do a study, I mean, it's pretty simple that you're looking for parody amongst other gaming institutions that have 4:00 am as their ability to serve liquor and you just want the same thing. I understand the competition. But do what effect the 50-mile radius would have? Have you guys looked at that portion of the Bill? And do you have an idea how that came to be in part of the Bill?

JASON GUYOT: I have looked at that portion of the Bill. I am not aware of how that came to be within the Bill.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Okay. And if we were to remove the study and just make it a statute that you have these--the gaming institutes have the ability to serve alcohol to 4am, you would not be opposed to that, correct?

JASON GUYOT: At this time, based on that I would not be opposed to that. I think we've been talking about this and for a few years now and I think it not only benefits the tribes in sustenance, but also the state.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Okay, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, that's all the questions I have.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you Senator Witkos. Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. I concur with Senator Witkos. I'll sign off to the Bill under all circumstances that brings parity between businesses. So, Jason, thank you very much for coming today. I enjoy watching you as you move through Foxwoods and are now leading Foxwoods. I think that that was a great move by the Tribe. And I am waiting to see how far off you're gonna go. I think it's wonderful. I do think that this doesn't have to be a study, I think the only reason it's a study so that we can come back with data to talk to other people.

I know that Representative Rosario was very interested in getting this Bill on the record to talk about having parity between the State of Connecticut and the state of New York in regards to Bridgeport's entertainment. Businesses down there. So, I think that this is something that we should work on, and I hoping that we can get parity between other gaming institutions in Connecticut and stop giving our money to other states. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Senator Osten. Are there any further questions? If not, Jason, thank you very much for your time and your testimony.

JASON GUYOT: Thank you very much, Chairman. Thank you, Senator Osten, and thanks for Committee.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Hey, Mr. Clerk, Patricia McCooey?

SAMUEL CLARK: Okay, so Patricia is not in yet, but we do have Paul Farnsworth though.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay, great. Okay. Okay, Mr. Farnsworth, if you could unmute yourself.

PAUL FARNSWORTH: Okay. Thank you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Great. Thank you. Would you like to proceed with your testimony?

PAUL FARNSWORTH: Yes. Chairman, Senator Maroney, Chairman Representative D'Agostino, Ranking Members, and honorable Members of the General Law Committee. My name is Paul Farnsworth of North Branford, Connecticut. And I am writing to voice my opposition to Governor's Bill number 6445 as it is presently worded.

I have been licensed in Connecticut for more than 40 years as an R2 elevator journeymen and as an R1 unlimited elevator contractor. Currently, I'm serving as a contractor member and past Chairman of the Elevator Installation, Repair and Maintenance Work Examining Board aka the Elevator Board for the State of Connecticut.

Current standards in Connecticut have resulted in highly trained highly skilled, licensed occupational tradespersons. This culture of strict training and standards. This resulted in fewer deaths and workplace injuries than most other states. Expansion of economic opportunity should not be allowed to be promoted at the expense of public safety or workplace safety.

My opinion, the applications from those that are entering from out of state should be reviewed by the appropriate occupational licensing board such as the Elevator Board. The board has the expertise as through the other occupational boards to evaluate the requisite skills to provide what we call equivalent experience. And that is important because not all the states have equivalent training.

The elevator trade in particular, has a well-funded apprenticeship program that lasts between four and five years with 8000 hours of on-the-job training and up to 144 hours per year of classroom-related

construction. Furthermore, the apprentices are working under licensed crafts person as part of their on-the-job training, ensure the health safety and welfare of the general public and trades persons working in occupations licensed by the Department of Consumer Protection will be jeopardized by Governor's Bill No. 6445

As it is presently awarded, and I oppose the Bill at this time. I am available for any questions or further information or research necessary to craft this Bill into a format that would best serve the citizens of the State of Connecticut. Thank you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you very much.
Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT ((8TH): Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your testimony. So, I'd like to ask you, first of all, how is the business of elevators in Connecticut now in terms of your workforce development and things like that? You laid out your structure, some similar to most trades? You said your contractor license, you are a journeyman person, and you have apprentices under you. Is that correct? That they're working in the field?

PAUL FARNSWORTH: Yes. Right now, the elevator trade is quite busy under the circumstances of being essential employees in the State of Connecticut, and we are continuing with our apprenticeship programs with the present COVID situation that we're faced with, but ongoing, we feel that the safety and the training that has been provided through the programs have aided in the reduction of potential injuries in Connecticut. And we feel that this can continue if the Bill is rewarded in a manner that allows for the recognition that the occupational trades are meeting a requirement of higher levels of skills and education.

REP. ACKERT (8): Essentially [03:26:36] outside of state, let's say there was a lot that mirrored --

it'd be easier for us to accept that type of a training of a -- comparable to I believe, if I'm not mistaken that in your trade you can have three apprentices under one journey person, is that correct?

PAUL FARNSWORTH: No under Chapter 393 it's to one-to-one ratio. And we have one apprentice for one mechanic. Some of the other trades do allow up to three, as you suggested, but not the elevator trade in particular.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Okay, and then -- okay, that's all my questions. Mr. Chairman. I thank you and I appreciate your testimony.

PAUL FARNSWORTH: Thank you.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Great. Thank you very much, Representative Ackert. Are there any other questions? Okay, if not, Mr. Farnsworth, thank you very much for your testimony.

PAUL FARNSWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Representative D'Agostino. Would you like to take over?

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Clerk, who do we have next?

SAMUEL CLARK: Up next is, Dave Roche.

DAVE ROCHE: I think I'm here.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Dave, we can see and hear you. You are on sir.

DAVE ROCHE: Great, nice to see you all this afternoon. Chairman D'Agostino, Chairman Maroney, Ranking Members Witkos and Rutigliano. So, I'm gonna deal with everything from a perspective of an actual construction worker in the State of Connecticut.

I've been a 42-year member -- excuse me, with the exception of Representative Ackert, I've been a 42 year member of the Sheet Metal workers local union 40 in Connecticut, an SM 2 license holder. I'm also president of the Connecticut State Building phase for the last 11 years. But I am still an active license holder Sheet Metal worker.

I've also really was a big participant when the North Carolina decision came down, and Representative D'Agostino, I think you can remember we worked together with Commissioner Seagull and actually Commissioner Harris prior to that, to keep the Boards involved in the process, but protect the state against North Carolina happening in Connecticut.

And I thought we really make some great strides here to the current situation we have, as we do it today, I don't see where there's such a burden that everybody seems to be talking about how hard it is. I regularly have people call me from out of state, from other locals that are transferring into Connecticut. And we've worked with them to go through the state to the boards to get the approval. There's a board that's made up of industry experts. And it's not to keep people out. It's just the kind of overview to see the knowledge base. Many of us have said today, where there's not much of a difference. To be honest with you, I think there is especially when it comes to colds and stuff, if you look at what's unfortunately happened in Texas right now, those are situations that those workers, not to their fault just weren't trained properly, maybe, putting pipes in when it's well insulated, frost lines, things like that.

So, when they come up to Connecticut, I think the process of sitting there and listening to a worker asking him about his training isn't to keep them away. It's the place in which to his benefit, if he comes up here, in his knowledge base is lacking in

some specific areas, and we can direct them into an apprentice program maybe to be slotted as a second- and third-year apprentice because he needs that extra training. That's no cost to him for the building trades. We don't charge for apprenticeships; we pay for it. So, we will sort it out. Okay, go back and be a third year. We'll work you up and get you up to that level.

So, what we're continually still trying to bring him in. There's a lot of things that somebody mentioned, tech schools, I'm a tech school graduate, AI Prints Tech in Harford. At that time, I was given a year's credit into an apprentice program. So, our Sheet Metal workers are a four-year program, I did one, two and three. Great benefit to myself. Because when you come out of tech school there's a lot missing, you get that on the job. They don't quite get the big projects kind of atmosphere, they might do a house or two, but they don't get the big training. So that was a great, great advantage for me to go to tech school and get that credit. But again, the apprenticeship time was probably the most valuable piece of it.

So again, I really don't want you to think that we're anti-bringing workers into the state. But quite the opposite. The biggest problem with Connecticut right now is we're kind of out of jobs. I mean, I monitor all jobs, whether you know, before they're gone to whether they're union or non-union projects, and the big ones just--

SAMUEL CLARK: Excuse me Mr. Roche, we're at the three-minute marker.

DAVE ROCHE: So, I'll answer any questions. But I see the situation happening at Amazon right now and Windsor. It's not good. I just had somebody going there the other day. He came out and he told me they thought they were working -- welcome to a Third World project. It was that bad and these people live in the basin near the airport. We don't really want

that; we want qualified people that can do the work to protect the residents of Connecticut. So, thank you.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you, and we had some testimony -- and thank you for being here. It's always good to see you. We've had to testify during the day, but it's probably worth you touching on it. What particular trades are seen -- we've heard numbers as high as 30% unemployment. What are you seeing sort of across the board?

DAVE ROCHE: Well, I can tell you, I can speak for my trade. In most of -- doing in trades, I know I'm 35% unemployment right now. I've got 62 workers working between Syracuse, New York and in Providence, Rhode Island, because that's where the work is. And I got to take the open shop, isn't much different because they're coming in knocking on my door pretty regularly. Even if we got anything going on now, I'm not talking about housework, we don't -- that's not really in our realm. I'm talking about the more commercial size projects. So, I gotta think it's 30% across the board, at least. Right now.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): [Inaudible] to give a sense of what the other trades are saying?

DAVE ROCHE: I think that's across the board, or maybe even a little bit north up. And I also sit on the state unemployment advisory board. So, we look at all that numbers here too, as well. And there's significant unemployment, you know, across the board.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): I asked this question earlier, and I'll pose it to you as well. Because I'm trying to see if there's any sort of areas of compromise here that we can get to, and look the committee is happy to play that role if the administration and the trades are having difficulty getting together themselves. We've served that role before; I think we're happy to do it too here. In

terms of the review process that you mentioned and the role that you currently serve, if we were to embed that statue, would you be a medical, at least to some sort of timeframe where the boards would have to turn a decision around - excuse me, a recommendation around to the administration, I don't know, 30 days, whatever it would be, so that there's not a lag.

DAVE ROCHE: So, I think there's really not much of a lag actually anyway, because I know that boards meet, the volunteer boards, I believe they meet monthly. But today with zoom and everything, I think they could be put together faster to review applications. So, I think that's not an issue, as far getting them through the process. I don't know if that answers everything.

As far as working with the administration, I've been working with this particular piece of it not counting last year, for a couple of months now, with Johnny Dach, and the rest of them to try to -- we really think the integrity of the boards are important. You mentioned earlier, and I know everybody kind of picks on the glass guy. Two years ago, two years ago, Ram High School, a glazing company from out of state came in, and a guy got seriously injured because you wasn't licensed, he snuck in, he wasn't licensed, he didn't know really what he was doing, and a case of glass fell on him. An accident that's -- so there's danger everywhere, and I get that.

We can't blame everything on an accident, that's our profession. We work in a dangerous environment. But I think I think at least this kind of just gets you into that - lets you know if this guy's really lacking something, or guy or lady or whatever.

We talked about veterans; we've got what we call smart heroes. So, my organization is smart sheet metal, we are really transportation workers. So, we go into the into the bases, and train them and say,

okay, when you get out, we're gonna send you over to -- you live in Connecticut, we're going to send you - if that's where you live, we're gonna send you over there and get you into a program over there. Robert Ross, I need to have a conversation with him, 'cause I don't think he knows what's available to him, especially for veterans and spouses.

So, again, there's a lot, maybe there's a lot more communication that needs to happen, especially when I hear somebody representing the military and they don't know about our programs, you know, woman in the trades. There's no one that has a bigger plant club, where it is I'm looking forward. But that involves women in the trades, right? We have a national organization there. As a matter of fact, next month is our national conference of women in the trades, you can look it up in the building trade's website, the National Building, trades website.

So, there's a lot that's offered out there, to get people into Connecticut and get them to work. Again, it's not a worker problem. It's a job problem at this point. Coming out of COVID. And we have all these people out of work, we should be concentrating on where we're gonna get these jobs from, because then we can bring on the 1000 workers, but if we only got jobs for 20 of them, that's going to keep a lot of unemployment. And when they come in, and they're unemployed, where do they go? They go to the state on appointments, and that we're paying again. So, we wanna avoid that we don't want - I don't wanna -

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Fair enough. Let me get to some questions that people may have for you. I think - Senator Witkos, are you--

SENATOR WITKOS (80TH): Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dave, thanks for testifying today. The question, when you said we're down to 35%

unemployment, is that attributed to COVID or was that pre-COVID as well?

DAVE ROCHE: No, no, that's not -- we actually were essential workers. So, we had a few projects that shut down some of EL on the private side, but COVID didn't really affect us. It's just there's not a lot of work in Connecticut, you could drive around Connecticut. How many cranes do you see?

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): I know, but as you know, and I'm not gonna get into -- we always hear, especially when we talk about the ratio in apprenticeship with those of the private side saying we wanna hire more, we're so busy. So, I mean, that's what -- it seems like as policymakers we get stuck in the middle of trying to figure out what's happening there.

But I have a question. And I asked Kimberly Glassman, I don't know if you were watching when she was on, but I'll ask you the same thing because as Chairman D'Agostino said, sometimes in the committee were willing to work to try to put some compromised language to move something forward because I think all of us wanna see Connecticut to be considered a business-friendly state, to allow people to move here, make jobs here. And then, you know, we stay here, and the Governor's point that we should have more taxpayers in the state certainly rings true to me.

But how do we address the fact that -- how do we address the fact that -- you testified that an example somebody came in, they had a lot of experience load, we put them in apprentice 3 without even a number. Like I said to Kimberly, I said, what happens if somebody had seven years' experience in a previous job, shouldn't we just make sure that they have some stance in contracting that are specific to Connecticut to make sure they're up to speed and then they should be, okay?

So that's question one. My follow up question to that is, I thought if I recall correctly, Johnny Dach said that, they would consult with the contracting boards to make sure that you guys were comfortable with the various tests that were going to be given. So, you'd have input on the material that they're going to be tested on. So, you felt comfortable that they were meeting whatever things that were adopted by everybody involved. So, I guess those are my two questions.

DAVE ROCHE: I believe the testing is already - I think there is already involvement with the testing. I think there's an apprenticeship counselor from each industry that kind of oversees that. So, I think that's already there. I apologize, can you repeat the first question? Is it on apprenticeships?

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): No, I'm staying away from apprenticeships. My question was - because I was going off for the example that you said that if somebody came in, they were working, you would be started off at the beginning, maybe put them as apprentice 3. But what happens if somebody with your years of experience, were going to another state. Wouldn't you consider that a slap in the face if you've worked 30 years in your trade and you wanted to, and you said, I got another 10 years or five more years, I wanna work in this state? And they said, well, you can start off as an apprentice three level in our state. How does that look to somebody that's-

DAVE ROCHE: I'm not a board member. But public's welcome to I said it on a lot of them. I will tell you, I don't see that that happens very, very often. I think people come in with that kind of experience and they show that sort of board, the board says go ahead and take that test. It's more people that just really haven't worked in the industry. Listen, obviously, if you've worked 30 years in an industry, you should be pretty good at what you're doing right now. Well, you probably wouldn't have made it for 30

years. So, I think, you know, I don't think that happens a lot.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Yeah, but you know, what the problem is, is that everybody else is testifying. So, if I worked in Texas for 20 years, and I came up here, if I -- and I agree with your logic that you probably know what you're doing, if you've been doing it for 20 years, but people are testifying saying, well, they don't know the Connecticut standards in Texas, or they don't know this, because they worked in that state. I mean, obviously, there's gonna be some nuances per state or per region in the country that you may not be aware of. But I think that's part of--

DAVID ROCHE: Right. I think that's a good I think that's the expertise of the board, just to protect, to protect the residents of Connecticut to make sure of that. Again, I think the boys are very, very fair. So, I just don't see that as a problem. I really don't. There's fairness there, the boards are made up of not just people from unions, and they are open shop as well contractors. So, I think it's a great system. And this is what Connecticut has always done, Connecticut just kind of got some of the greatest laws on the books, we [04:52:53] enforcement. Those are things that we have -- this is another piece that we're just letting go out the window, if we're to do this.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): I know that Chairman D'Agostino is to talk to you about, how boys meet and he said, you know, everything was virtual now, so it probably be done faster. But could you give me an idea as to, say I was a licensed tradesman in another state, I moved to Connecticut, because, say my wife got a job so I tagged along. I said, well, I'm licensed here, so I can go anywhere with this. And I arrive in Connecticut, and say I've been doing it for 10 years. What's the turnaround time for me to actually - if I applied to go before the boards

to get my license so I can actually start working in Connecticut? On average,

DAVID ROCHE: I think the way it is today, I got to think that it's really quick because -- and I can't give you a timeline I'd say less than a month, because right now it's like almost as if one person sits off the board with somebody from the department and somebody from apprenticeship. Before it used to be in front of the whole board. So, it's not that way anymore because of North Carolina.

So, I'm thinking a couple weeks. I know, and I know people -- if you're moving to Connecticut, you're not making your mind up on Mondays and Wednesday, I'm moving to Connecticut. So, what I see is people call me up and say, hey, listen, I'm thinking of moving to Connecticut, six months, three months. What do I got to do to work in Connecticut and everything else?

So, I never see that timeline being accurate, not that it can't happen. Don't get me wrong. I think in the situations that it does, I think the department is sympathetic to that. And I think they do their best to try to get at least that committee, one person off that committee to be there to do that vetting process.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Okay, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Okay, thank you. Representative Ackert do you have a question or was that your hand up from before?

REP. ACKERT (8TH): I have question, sir.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Please go ahead. Thank you.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Appreciate it. And yeah, well, not many people are

bringing up apprentices all and let it go. But David, thank you for being here and your testimony. Sorry to hear the jobs aren't here. Like your members need. You mentioned that you had to send - and I imagine that the Sheet Metal workers had to go to Rhode Island for a job?

DAVID ROCHE: Correct. In Syracuse.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): And so, you're so you're local - - So their local 40 here in Connecticut, you're having to send them -- you said Syracuse, New York, is that where it was?

DAVID ROCHE: Correct?

REP. ACKERT (8TH): What is that process if you don't mind, how is that -- is there a lag there they go, they call you say, hey, David, we need some workers, can you help us out?

DAVID ROCHE: Being part of the Union -- they don't have a license requirement in Syracuse. So, they call up and say, hey, we need workers. So, I'd say the turnaround time is a week or so.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Rhode Island, I think is a similar process. I think New York's got like borough licenses. They don't want state license in New York, right?

DAVID ROCHE: There are some borough licenses, Rhode Island's different Rhode Island is a Sheet Metal license state. So, what we what we try to do is, we get a heads up and we send them up and go through the same process, they go through with their gold standard apprenticeship program. And they turn out into the state of Rhode Island, Rhode Island sees that gold standard and they schedule them to take the test.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Then they come back to Connecticut and work right? They are from Connecticut?

DAVE ROCHE: This is my fair, because we've been we've been on this downward trend for a while now. Is that when they go to Rhode Island and Syracuse and the wages are a little bit higher than Connecticut. Massachusetts is considerably higher. They're gonna stay there. I'm worried about people going up there and forget about coming and staying in Connecticut.

They're gonna -- what the heck, I can -- why drive an hour and a half every day when I can just move there. And they got prevailing wage laws, that don't even come close to Connecticut. They're like \$2,000 thresholds. So, we don't have an advantage there. We make a little bit less, and it's a little bit higher threshold to get to that kind of a wage that you can sustain in Connecticut.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, David, again, for the testimony. Appreciate it.

DAVID ROCHE: Thank you.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you Representative Ackert, and I don't see any more questions for you, Dave. So, thank you for hanging in there with us and testifying.

DAVE ROCHE: Thank you all. Have a great evening.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Sam.

SAMUEL CLARK: Up next is Michael Thompson.

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Good afternoon, everybody. Chairman D'Agostino. Chairman Maroney, Ranking Members Witkos and Rutigliano, and Members of the General Law Committee. My name is Michael Thompson.

I'm the Executive Director for the Associated Sheet Metal and Roofing Contractors of Connecticut. I'm here to voice our concerns regarding House Bill 6445.

The Bill would require the DCP to issue occupational licenses, permits and registrations to people who move to Connecticut, who have met several reciprocal conditions for holding a license in another state. The Bill is intended to remove barriers to workforce entry and expand and expedite access to licensed occupations for current and incoming residents, including military spouses. We support these goals.

However, the Bill in its current form does not do enough to ensure that the standards an applicant may have met in another area outside Connecticut are equivalent or sufficient for the occupational licensing boards and reviewing applications for licensure. Our state's occupational licensing laws are designed to implement standards and achieve workplace conditions that are unique to the state in order to protect consumers and the public safety, understanding codes and standards in another state in order to pass an exam for certification here are not sufficient to protect Connecticut residents.

On-the-job training of apprentices, in addition to rigorous classroom instruction are designed to ensure that they learn and understand the specific skills of a trade that the applicant is qualified for an occupational license here. This Bill does not provide a sufficient role for the occupational licensing boards to oversee the process of ensuring applicants for an occupational license meet Connecticut's workplace standards. The boards which are comprised of industry experts representing labor and management were established to ensure that the applicants understand Connecticut's building and fire safety codes, Procedures and Standards and know how the work is performed in the state. They're designed to protect the consumers in Connecticut.

Additionally, the Bill would allow any occupational license holder in another state, who has held their license for only one year to come to Connecticut and sit for licensing exam. This would undermine Connecticut's occupational licensing program and pose significant problems for the construction industry. Construction Industry jobs are very dangerous despite training and classroom instruction for workers. Strong licensing standards under Connecticut's law helps determine qualified persons who can sit for exams here and keep workers and the public safe. Thanks for your opportunity to testify.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you, and I don't see any questions raised so thank you for your testimony.

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Thanks very much.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Sam.

SAMUEL CLARK: Up next is Brian Moran.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): There you go.

BRIAN MORAN: All right, great. Thank you. Having a little technical difficulty here, hang on a second. Co-Chair Maroney, Co-Chair D'Agostino and Members of the Committee. My name is Brian Moran. I'm Director of Government Affairs for the New England Convenience Stores and Energy Marketers Association. We represent convenience stores and gasoline retailers, independent transportation fuel distributors in the businesses we supply them. In Connecticut there are almost 1700 convenience stores, employing over 25,000 people. On behalf of our members.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer three comments for the committee's consideration on House Bill 6459. First, the committee needs to articulate the goal in in guiding principles in the Bill for the Commissioner to apply as the department designs,

implements, and generates recommendations on to the study. We suggest that priority consideration be given to consumer choice and convenience and fostering an open and competitive marketplace.

Second, the study must not only address the current permit categories, but must explicitly ask whether the adoption of other permit categories is also appropriate. For example, long standing grocery store permit with its outdated eligibility criteria, for all practical purposes serves as a barrier on convenience store entry into this market. By our estimates of the 1700 stores our members operate across the state less than 100 such permits.

If House Bill 6101 moves to enactment, then even more of our stores would be forever excluded over the interests of large box retailers and others. We request the Committee explicitly to direct the Commissioner to study new categories of permits, specifically a unique, new permit category with updated eligibility criteria for convenience stores.

Lastly, everyone needs a deadline to get the job done. Next, I'm gonna recommends the Committee establish the deadline for the Commissioner's report and suggest to be submitted within six months of the Bill's effective date, but no later than January 1, 2022. We appreciate the opportunity to provide these statements for the Committee's consideration and we'd be happy to answer any questions.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you, seeing none. Sam, who do we have next?

SAMUEL CLARK: Up next is Joe toner.

JOE TONER: Hello Chair?

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Joe, you're on.

JOE TONER: Thank you. Chairman D'Agostino, Chairman Maroney, Ranking Member Witkos, Ranking Member

Rutigliano, Members of General Law Committee, my name is Joe Toner. I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut State Building Trades Council. Connecticut State Building Trades Council is submitting testimony in strong opposition to House Bill 6445, an act to expand the economic opportunity in occupational license by the Department of Consumer Protection.

I want to give you a stat I think that was already brought up a little bit earlier. And I want to touch on a few things that I don't--that we don't feel that should be changed. And maybe we get discussion on it. But between January 1, 2018 through January 1, 2021, 1188 out of state applicants applied to sit for a construction related occupational license exam, including the military applications through DOL. Of that number only 11 were fully denied based on incomplete information or other reasons.

I would have to say by looking at these numbers that the opportunities are being provided to people that are looking to work in the Connecticut in the licensed trades. It's in the public's best interest for a candidate looking to reciprocate an occupational license to show equivalency before taking an open book exam. Every jurisdiction issuing a license has different codes, procedures and hands on experience in issuing a license. Licensing boards are made up of professionals in their perspective fields. Having the board evaluate candidates' experience before taking the test gives the public a level of insurance. As you can see by the numbers stated earlier, this is certainly not a barrier.

The building trades locals are struggling to provide work opportunities for their members during the pandemic. Many locals are sending members out of state to work. Some of these highly trained middle-class blue-collar workers are not coming back to Connecticut. Other states in the region have figured out that austerity doesn't work in helping people they're in the middle of a pandemic.

It's unfortunate that the administration is waging class warfare by attacking Connecticut residents that hold occupational licenses. Once again working families are being marginalized by the elitist. And I say that kind of with mixed emotions, because when we spoke to the administration, the administration's intent was to have everybody moving to the State of Connecticut, and any type of license was a barrier.

But here we are being attacked and it's coming down to the occupational licenses in the building trades. I think more professionals, and professional license are being overlooked at the sake of working people in State of Connecticut. As brother Roche mentioned earlier, folks are moving out of Connecticut. Blue collar folks are moving out of Connecticut for the lack of opportunity.

But certainly, more professional folks are moving into Connecticut. And I don't think anything has been addressed from the administration of reducing barriers for the professionals that come in. I think it's more restrictive for an attorney to relocate and practice in the State of Connecticut than it is for a trades person to come in and exercise their work practice in the State of Connecticut.

So, when we get to the point of who we want to make sure that reducing barriers that are needed, such as in the building trades, if there's only 11 people out of 1200, that were denied, I feel--we feel that we should go back to the boards, let the boards determine equivalency and from that point forward, the folk to move forward to work within the State of Connecticut. Nobody's saying to pack your bags and leave. In many cases, when they go in front of the board if they're showing equivalency and they're missing one portion, they will come back, they will they will be educated or they'll get--they'll bring up--to be brought up to par on that section. And they'll be given the full license.

SAMUEL CLARK: Mr. Toner, we're at three minute mark.

JOE TONER: Okay. So I'm happy to answer any questions. I just think it's very concerning that it seems like the blue-collar folks are being that are being attacked and trying to remove barriers that are already--that don't exist on the license side for the occupational trades.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thanks Joe, you and I have talked before about the boards in this in an effort to try to balance a role for them. But understanding the sort of legal rubric created by that Supreme Court case, and I'll ask you the same question I've been asking the various leaders here of which you're obviously one and that's easy to understand why your members look up to you. You know, if there is a role for the boards, would they be willing to commit to making recommendations within a certain time frame so that sort of the flow can be kept going? There's not a there's not a backlog taken into account? I noticed that many of them do that now. But if we were to consider a role for them in statute would that be something that you'd be amenable to?

JOE TONER: Yeah, I was talking with the affiliates. I think streamlining the process would be something that the building trades would be in favor of.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): And I can tell you I think you've got a sense of this Joe. That there's probably a bipartisan interest here to doing something at least for the veterans and spouses of veterans, and we appreciate all the things the trades already do. But I think there's Members of this Committee that do feel like it is it is a role for us as legislators to again sort of codify some mechanisms for veterans and veteran spouses. Is there some areas of compromise we can reach there?

JOE TONER: Yeah, I don't see why not. But I would have to go back to one thing. I'd have to say at

least for Chapter 393, for the occupational license in the building trades. I think it's the public's best interest that we show some type of equivalency. The license are put in place for a reason, right? The standards and codes are different all over the country. So, I think showing equivalency is necessary for anybody quite frankly Representative. You know when they're coming into the State of Connecticut. I think it's in the best interest of not only the person that's applying, but for the citizens of Connecticut in the construction industry. One mistake in the construction industry, unfortunately it could be life threatening.

So, I don't think and we've listened. As Dave Roche mentioned earlier, I think Kimberly Glassman mentioned earlier, we're supportive of all the veterans. And we do have a lot of programs for the veterans. But I go it still goes back to equivalency and proving equivalency I think is in the best interest of everybody.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): I know that you're gonna disagree with many-one on that. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Thank you Mr. Chairman. And thank you Joe for being here today and willing to work with the Committee on this. You know, I guess I was okay with everything you said until you know, your last couple of sentences where you say, this is a safety issue. And nobody has proven to me yet, through their testimony or through examples that if this were to pass that all of a sudden, we're going to have all these workplace accidents and people going to get injured.

We still have OSHA standards, both at the state and the federal level. It's still going to be--these companies, whoever they work for pay insurance, that's involved. So, they're gonna make sure that their workers follow safety protocols, and I honestly, I'm tired of people just throwing that out there and nilly-willy because it sounds good. So,

I'd like you to offer me some examples that I can go back and I can look at where if we were to enact this, that you believe that it's going to cause injuries in the workplace because we said that somebody has proven that they don't have to go before the Contracting Standards Board but they're still taking the same tests, that it's going to cause that--that's the causation of the reaction of this legislation.

JOE TONER: So, we can't go back because obviously-- Senator, we can't go back because obviously we don't have those problems because these standards are put in place. So that's one good part. But I will say going forward, codes and standards are different everywhere. So, I think what you brought up earlier, and I think you might have been in law enforcement. I think you brought up earlier that, that type of training is typical, but it's typical across the board probably in every academy, right? I mean, it might change a little bit. But the construction industry, it's not. So, codes and standards are different. And people are coming from different parts of the country. So, if you want an example of a disaster in construction, and brother Roche brought it up a little bit earlier, stop by Windsor, the Amazon project. Because I mean, the Amazon project is across the country.

People are getting killed left and right at these Amazon projects. That job right now is probably one of the most unsafe jobs that we have in the State of Connecticut with 300 out of state workers. Many, four or five living in hotels up on Route 75 by the airport. So, I don't think--all we're asking is if you can show equivalency in front of the board which is made up of union and nonunion labor and management, right? That's all we're asking.

And then you take it from that point. I just think that the safety part of it--a pipe fitter from Alabama is not going to be as qualified or up to speed on the codes in the standards in Connecticut

then they wouldn't be in Connecticut. So, I think it's in the public's best interest that these folks show equivalency. And then from that point it's move forward.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Joe, I agree. And that's why when Mr. Dach from the Governor's office was testifying, I said there should be a section on the test that's specific to Connecticut for standard, whether it's codes, building codes, or safety, whatever you want to call it. But if the applicant is successful, because they pass that, then we shouldn't have a problem with it because obviously they do. They're educating themselves as to what Connecticut requires, when they have that--their skill set has been over however many years they've been in the trades, they were able to do that.

But if they failed the examination, then guess what you've got to go back to, you're not going to retake it again because obviously you don't know. And then maybe, as Dave had testified, then you go into Apprentice 3 level, and you have to work a year in order to get your license that way, but I applaud the Governor and then I think he's trying to remove what he perceives to be a barrier. But if the knowledge is there, why would we preclude the person from able to earn a living for themselves or their family?

JOE TONER: Well, in a way agree, but I don't think the process is broken Senator. We don't feel that the process is broken. I mean in these other areas when folks will come in and take tests and say there are taking an equivalency in front of the board or show equivalency in front of the board and take a test. And if they're missing one part that I don't - -I'm not a licensed trade. I'm an iron worker by trade, but they go back and they'll hang on to the portions that they passed. And then they'll just work on that one portion.

And it benefits the person, it benefits the community. I mean quite frankly on this Bill, the Section 2 on this Bill with the moral character I mean, that's something that we do support, right? I mean, it's a barrier and it's been a problem for us in the building trades with getting the population that--the underrepresented population, the general trades it's easier for those folks to come into the general trades. And not just because the other mechanical trades or the licensed trades don't want them. But that's a barrier for these folks for employment, that's Section 2 on moral character,

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Did I miss something in the-- and I don't know if you can speak this but, in the testimony, I heard earlier, somebody said, "Well, a lot of our jobs are up in New York or New Jersey, Rhode Island. And that's where our folks are working." And but they don't require a license in New York. So, is that the reason why our guys can work? I mean what happens if they require a license in New York and--but our guys are unemployment, and that rate would trade be higher?

JOE TONER: License in New York is not a statewide, it's a borough wide. It's a borough wide license I believe, so depending on where they are. I can't speak to that but I know for--in some of the trades is a reciprocal Bill that we go back to a Gold Standard program to training. And that's like a standard type of training. And once our members go to one of the states they sit down and they take the test.

And as Dave mentioned earlier, I mean in Rhode Island from what Dave's testimony was, that there's the sheet metal workers are licensed in Rhode Island and worse than the people over there seamlessly, right? I mean, so connected, because there's no opportunities in Connecticut. And that goes through a board in Rhode Island, they're sitting down to take the test. So, I don't see--I honestly don't see a need for it. I think what Representative

D'Agostino mentioned earlier was we have to streamline that process for these folks that are coming in.

But I go back to that same word equivalency is something that's has to be proven. It has to be and when we spoke to Johnny Dach, Johnny Dach did all the talking quite frankly Senator. And that's what's frustrating. And I appreciate the Committee, we appreciate the Committee because you guys are trying to wrap your head around and trying to figure out what's going on. And we were kind of told we had a half hour with Johnny Dach and we were told by him what he's doing. And that was it. So, it's, we're frustrated.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): But you know that we operate a little bit differently here. And I know that Chairman D'Agostino is trying to find some compromise where, you know, get some input from everybody to say we want to make sure that the folks that are working in Connecticut in those professions have the best skills and the knowledge that they can so nobody gets hurt, and nobody gets harmed in the work that they do. But also, to make sure that we protect those--to make sure that exactly--one bad apple doesn't spoil the whole bunch where people say, you lose the trust factor in the trade. So, we want to do that.

But I guess--and I can tell you Joe I like your testimony. Because at least you're willing to have a conversation with this Committee. Others before you have testified no reciprocity period. And to me that's a nonstarter. Where we can't find something here, where there's an agreed upon whether it's a cursory sign off by the Contracting Board to say, "Yep, this person, individual meets all the students that we believe they should be eligible to take the test." We agree to when an application is before us, we have 72 hours or three days, whatever it is, whatever, nine hours is in a week. Five business days to review it to give yes or no. But something

so things aren't held up. And I think that's kind of what I'm looking for anyways.

JOE TONER: But I think we have to ask ourselves this Senator, "Are we more comfortable having a board of professionals in that business review an applicant or give it to a Commissioner, who quite frankly might not know anything about construction?"

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): You know, I mean, I understand what--as long as it's not a delay, and that's my concern is the delay. So there has to be kind of a time frame to say, you know, if you don't get it within, act on it within--I don't know what's reasonable at this point. That's why the public hearing is here before us then it automatically allows you to go get the test if the board has failed you to act in a certain amount of time. So, if we were going to do something like that, what would you say would be a fair amount of time that if an application came before a contracting board, for a board to look at it, rule on it and if you if you just take no action, then that person proceeds to take the exam?

JOE TONER: Well, quite frankly I think streamlining the processes is important. I don't think letting somebody not take the exam is in the best interest for anybody even the applicant. I just don't see--but I would have to say, a monthly process. I mean you know, and as Dave mentioned earlier when you're moving to Connecticut, it's not going to be a knee jerk reaction, right? I mean--

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): So, you're saying 30 days?

JOE TONER: Yeah.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): So, if the person applied to get a license in Connecticut, they're from out of state, the standard contract or whatever the boards called I apologize, has 30 days in which to review the application, invite the person if you'd need to

interview. If they don't, if you take no action or fail to review within 30 days then the person can go to the licensing and just take the exam?

JOE TONER: Yeah, I don't know if I would say--I say you should go in front of the board to prove equivalency and then take it from there Senator. I'm just being--I understand but I just don't--one mistake is one too many in the construction industry. And we've lost a lot. Unfortunately, we've lost a lot of lives in the construction industry and our folks they're not guaranteed to go home every day, just like such as yourself in law enforcement, right? I mean so when sometimes it's--and as an iron worker by trade, I mean that's one of the most dangerous professions, right?

And I've been an iron worker for 32 years. So, you know, my son's an iron worker. So, it's near and dear to all our hearts. We all want to make sure that our members are going to work, they're making a livable wage, and then they're working under safe conditions. So, I would want that for any construction worker, quite frankly, Senator.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Okay. Thank you, Joe. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you. Representative Winkler please.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Yes, thank you for your testimony. Are you aware that in some states, the contractor needs a license, but the people working on the job do not?

JOE TONER: Yes.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): So, I was--in response to a question I heard you just asked. I went online to find out which state has the highest construction accidents and injuries and deaths. And it turned out to be North Dakota. So, I looked them up. And they

don't require sheet metal workers and other workers to have a license. The contractor says, "I've got the license, and I can hire who I want." But the people that actually do the sheet metal work don't have to have a license.

So, I think there is a correlation between licensing and deaths, accidents and injuries. And I'm sure that I can look up all the states that have this curious arrangement, and see whether or not lack of license does lead to more on the job accidents. Anyway, sorry that I didn't give you a question to answer.

JOE TONER: No, thank you Representative Winkler. But what I would say is, and this was touched on a little bit earlier too if I could quickly. For all that we do in the unionized construction industry around training. Safety is a number one with the building trades. And we make sure safety is incorporated in everything we do when we're training folks. So, that goes a long way with us and making sure that the folks have all the proper PPE and one mistake like I said earlier, is one too many. And we want to make sure our folks come home, but the training is very important.

And in coordination with the training comes the licenses, right? I mean, so with these Gold Standard programs, we're demonstrating in the construction industry that we're doing the classwork. We're doing a hands-on experience. And these folks that are coming to take the tests are well qualified. They're well qualified to present.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): So, if I did 10 years worth of sheet metal work in North Dakota, never got my contractor's license, they never had a sheet metal license. Then I come to Connecticut. I have no license, just experience. Can I still help appear before the board, take the test and do that stuff?

JOE TONER: Well, I think you'd have to show once again, you have to show equivalency and then they would determine where you are in the process. The board would.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

JOE TONER: You're welcome Representative Winkler.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you and seeing no more questions Joe, I'll thank you for coming and hanging with us here.

JOE TONER: Thank you Representative.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you. Sam.

SAMUEL CLARK: Next is Bill Finch

BILL FINCH: Hello Chairman D'Agostino, and Chairman Maroney and Members of the Committee, it's nice to be back with so many old friends. I know you have a difficult job. I did it for many years. And I want to thank you for your patience. This is a brave new world. We're in with testifying this way. But I think it to summarize what you've heard today; you're really being asked to change the existing law based on somebody's hunch that there might be people who want to come to Connecticut and be an electrician or one of the other occupational licenses.

And to the extent that that's true, there's already a process for them to wait in. And they do it based on the analysis that you've heard all about. But I would suggest you as we've heard yesterday in our meeting with some of the Committee Members that there are many other reasons why people are moving to Connecticut. Extraordinarily high property taxes, high housing costs, high utility costs, and the like. I don't think it's the licensing that's

keeping people from coming here as well intentioned as the legislation might be.

And while we're talking about employment, I surveyed our three electric locals that I work in cooperation with NECA, which is the Electrical Contractors' Association. And they have about 30-35% unemployment depending on what local it is. So, who among us wants to pick the 65% of electricians who are working and say, you're going to be unemployed because someone from Tennessee's moved here and they want your job? There really is no issue and there is no threat.

The contractors are happy hiring some of the most highly skilled electricians in the United States, and just to show you about our continuing education, you can see out here in the parking lot there's electricians right now taking continuing education exams in their car because of COVID. And some of the classes they take, you know, there's 1000 hours of classroom. They take more than a master's degree.

I think we've denigrated this trade a little bit by not understanding exactly how complicated it is and just saying a test is going to be all that matters. Here's the syllabus. It's five years of studying, five years of apprenticeship. Here's the handbook, the electrician's handbook, you know, I don't think the guy from Harvard would understand the electrician's handbook.

It's a very dangerous and very sophisticated field that electricians enter into. 10% of the construction deaths are electrocution. Do you really want somebody who's not trained in the safety--we have the lowest death rate in the United States of workers. And that includes construction workers, which are some of the most dangerous jobs. So, you've already got the best in the nation system, it costs the state nothing.

The unions and the contractors run the joint apprenticeship training program. They do double the amount of hours the federal government requests. We do 1000 hours of classroom, that's more than a master's degree. We do 8000 hours of apprenticeship and earn while you learn. I've asked electricians, I've said what percentage of the knowledge you apply every day in your job came from testing for the exam and the license? 20-30% is the amount they say. 80% of the work, that knowledge they apply every day is gained in that five years of apprenticeship. We're not even talking about that.

So, you know this, there is no need for this change. There's already a way for people to come into Connecticut, there's not a horde of people wanting to come in and pay our high property taxes. And we have the best in the nation system ready. Anything you do will dilute what you have. Anything you do to the best in the nation system, you have the cost of taxpayers, nothing will make the situation worse. It's gonna to kill jobs and it may kill some workers because we do train to safety. And we do train safety on those 8000 hours of apprenticeship--

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): I gotta just--I think you're heading to three minutes anyway. But you know. I want to be very clear here for the few people who may be laughing listening to this. Because I don't want anybody to be left with the wrong impression. No one on this Committee, Republican or Democrat is interested in any change in the law that let somebody just walk into Connecticut and start doing electrical work or construction work or iron work? No one is interested in that. No one has said that. The Bill doesn't say that.

No one on this Committee is going to say that. That's not what we're talking about here. So just dial it back a little bit in what you're saying, because I don't want people to have the wrong impression. That is absolutely not what we're

talking about here. And as you can tell, it's bothered me a little bit that I keep hearing this.

BILL FINCH: Let me explain.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Well, let me finish. What we're talking about. Is there a system we can put in place that works for everybody that does well. If that person from Tennessee wants to come here and buy a house in Connecticut and pay our taxes and be a productive member of this community? God bless. I want them to come. I want people in this state, right? So is there a system we can put in place that meets all these goals, makes sure somebody comes in, that they're trained, we've talked about making sure that they can take the test and continue to take the test, that the board reviews them, then we have a codified procedure. That's all we're talking about.

Let's stay away from the fire and brimstone here. I appreciate that that's a--I see that all too often in this Committee from the package stores. I don't want to see it from the trades. So, what we're talking about is something very narrow here. If we can reach agreement, great. It would be helpful to hear from you guys where you think there might be some ways, we can tweak things to make it more streamlined for people but still maintain that the health and safety and welfare requirements that everybody on this Committee, Republican and Democrat wants to see.

BILL FINCH: So, this is a public hearing. And I'd like to put on the record. What the public, at least NECA and IBEW think. So, we think we have the best in the nation, thanks to the cooperation between the Legislature, the Governor, the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch over the years at no cost to the taxpayer, the highest quality electricians in the world are educated here in Connecticut, through the joint apprenticeship training. Now, if you want to make it so that people that don't go through that

can be getting the same jobs that those who do go through, then I do believe--

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): What did I just say? But what do I just say? No one on this Committee and the Bill before it doesn't talk about exempting anyone from those processes. All right?

BILL FINCH: 8000 hours on the job training for five years.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): And if you've got the equivalent experience in another state, and can come in and are blessed by your boards, take the test and pass the test. If what you're saying is your position is that the only way someone can work in this state coming from another state is to have the exact same experience and exact same testing procedure, then that's fine, then that's your position, I get it. That's not very helpful for me, I can't speak for the rest of the Committee.

BILL FINCH: Well, you know, you've talked about a study today for the--something we all agree would make sense for the casinos. You probably ought to strike the word occupational in the first line, since we're only five or six of the dozens and hundreds of other licenses that you'll have a success, run it up the flagpole, get everybody else covered. They're not here protesting; we're protesting because we have a legitimate interest in keeping the public safe. And yes, 8000 hours on the job is better than 4000 or 2000, or 1000, or whatever the other states require.

We do have the best in the nation training. So, if you want less than that, then you'll be allowing people in from other states that have less, and now they may have equivalent. And that would be great if there's a way to handle that, but I don't think it's going to be handled in this kind of a format where peoples get all excited. I think you probably ought

to have a study for the occupations and do the 95% of all the other licenses that the Bill will cover.

And the other thing is to--I do think there should be somebody from fiscal analysis to look at this. The residency requirement in the State of Connecticut is really complicated and very difficult. And it puts the onus on law enforcement to find the people who are breaking the law. It's very similar to our state income taxes. Now, there's a lot of enforcement there, but there's not much enforcement here. And DCP doesn't have the staff to do it. So, I think you've got a problem with enforcing the residency in the Bill.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Representative Winkler. You're good?

REP. WINKLER (56TH): I forgot to take my hand down. I apologize.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you Representative. Senator Bradley, where are you? I'm haven't seen you today.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Hey. Thank you very much Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to speak, pulled over just to be able to greet yourself and wonderful Mayor Finch. It's been a while since I've seen you, Sir. And thank you for taking the time to come out and address this Committee. We appreciate your service in our great city of Bridgeport and the service you've done in our legislature as a senator in the past. So, thank you for your testimony.

I just had a few questions because you have you obviously have some pretty practical experience as a Mayor and as a previous legislator regarding certain issues. Under your leadership, we were able to develop skill points, which was a major development project in the city of Bridgeport. What was your experience doing such a tens of millions dollar project dealing with some of these constraints as a

Mayor? Was it something that was cumbersome? Was it something that was manageable? And maybe you can give us some practical testimony of what you've experienced with the current law as it's written?

BILL FINCH: Well, thank you for that question. As you probably remember, we did public and private project labor agreements which put me in the day-to-day contact with members of the building trades. I was honored to be given later 'Man of the Year', one year because of what Bridgeport did to create jobs in the inner city for our people because of project labor agreements, and working with the trades that have this high level of skill, and we didn't have that from workers from other states, we had it from our state. Everything we built, we gave the taxpayer what they paid for on time on budget in a workman like fashion.

And there was actually one school Senator that you probably remember the Discovery Magnet School, because of the building trades and their commitment to hiring the people from Bridgeport. We had 75% of the workers. I don't think any cities ever come close to that. 75% of the workers that built their school for their own children were from Bridgeport, there were women and minorities. So, building trades have a great value. And one of the great values they have is in the high level of training. I could have hired other companies, but I chose to hire the union companies, because they had the commitment to the people from Bridgeport. And they also had the highest skill.

And each time we did a project with the building trades. It was on time and on budget, we've never had a delay. And it was because all the building trades want to do is they want to work. And they want to show their high level of skill. I don't know if you saw but I just showed the parking lot here, where there's 30 cars in the parking lot where people are taking their continuing education exams, socially distance by the dim light of their car

lights in their interior car lights, like your test and play. Like you're in your car right now. They're taking tests.

We do 1000 hours in the classroom, and 8000 hours while you earn to learn. And that's why you get what you pay for it. And the interesting thing is for the people who think because I was an elected Democrat, it's a partisan thing. We had more Republican Mayors that I hung out with that did project labor agreements than Democratic Mayors, because they wanted to get for the taxpayers what they were paying for. And it was the skill. It was the fact that I knew that joint apprenticeship training program was giving me the best electricians in the world. Thank you for the question.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): My pleasure. One more question if I may, Mr. Chair, if you would indulge me. One of the other arguments that I've heard throughout this debate or this conversation has been the encumbrances that exists for minorities in general to enter the trades to be part of the trades.

You've noted some interesting statistics there of 70% or more in the projects that you've run having minority participation in that in those projects, even though they were unionized. What has been your experience of dealing with the trade in general? Has there been inclusion of minorities and the ability of minorities to enter these apprentice programs and go through what some have described as a rigorous process for better or worse?

BILL FINCH: Well, you know, you are a member of the Board of Education of Bridgeport, and you know, the special challenges that our children have in Bridgeport, especially when it comes to Math. So, we do whatever we can to reach out. Our people go into the inner city to all the job fairs and tell the kids and if any of the parents are listening, to have your kid, make sure they study Math, because

you can't be an electrician if you don't have a really good Math skills. But we do reach out. I was just sending emails out on that very subject today. Then you can see 75% of the workers who built the Discovery Magnet School were women and minorities and nearly all of that 75% were from Bridgeport. So, they have a great commitment.

And in terms of the veterans, you can't mention it enough. We have helmets to hardhats, where we have a tremendous outreach to hire the veterans. The one thing that it's amazing about the electrical trades is the cooperation between NECA, the owners of the contracting companies and the IBEW is that they have created a way to supply the market with the necessary numbers of workers and skill level of the workers. You know, one of the things we haven't mentioned about is there may be some people coming in, that come in, they take the license, and then they try to get employed and they can't get employed because they haven't had the skill level that our markets going to require especially in a tight market.

So, I'm not sure that we're doing them a favor necessarily, and I hope that Representative D'Agostino's words ring true here that we come up with a process where we can make sure that they have those skill levels because they may end up in a union hall or with a private contractor that's not union and they may not be able to get employed. We do have the highest level of skill In the country that as far as I'm aware,

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): One last question if I may Mr. Chair. I know I lied previously, excuse me for that. But if I could just--if you would indulge me with one final question. One of the concerns that I've heard as I chair Public Safety, when I tried to proliferate, gaming from the Commissioners was that having a limited access within the state when it comes to lottery for example is to our benefit, right? Because then we're not competing with New

York or our partners and our surrounding area who generally tend to be much bigger states and harder to compete with.

If we were to open up gaming. Is there something similar that we can equate to the labor market? If we were to open this up as we're attempting to write to allow people from Tennessee or whatever, to come to our state? Do you precede harm to the people here? What are the employment--and I guess a two part question, what are some of the employment rates currently for the people who are licensed under this rigorous process? Are they easily finding employment? Is there employment complications through COVID and the rest? Or is it something where the market is already saturated in terms of demand and there's not enough people to satisfy that demand?

BILL FINCH: Well, we've heard testimony before and I can reiterate. I've pulled our three locals Richburg, New Haven and Hartford and they're over 30% unemployment in the electricians' union in the Union halls in Connecticut that the NECA employers hire. So, we do have a serious problem right now. And we hope that the Governor and you, Senator and Senator Maroney and Representative D'Agostino can get together and try to come up with infrastructure spending. We're hopeful that divide administration with the emphasis on renewable energy and green technology will be bringing jobs to Connecticut, but right now, it's a pretty bad situation.

And I think that's why you see the building trades raising this flag here. We're proud of having the best training system. We don't want to see it diluted. And Representative D'Agostino said that he doesn't want to see that either. That's important. But we are feeling the threat when you've got 35% of your members not knowing--when building trades workers don't work there's no money coming in. Unlike other people that--there's no money coming, and they have to work to earn. They don't have

vacations and they don't have sick days; they have to show up on the job.

It's not an easy profession. It's not for the faint of heart. I don't know that I could do it. And I certainly couldn't master this manual, the handbook. And all of these classes in our syllabus. It's a very demanding and rigorous field. And it's probably the most rigorous and demanding in Connecticut.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Well, Mayor I appreciate your testimony and your breadth of knowledge on the subject matter. And I know that proofs in the pudding in terms of the tremendous products you've done here both in building our schools and in steel point and other developments here. So, I know that you have a breadth of knowledge when it comes to these issues. And I thank you for your testimony your time. And I'm glad to see you're doing well. Mr. Chair, thank you for indulging me with these questions and I retire the rest of my time. Thank you.

BILL FINCH: And congratulations to your new baby. Having a new baby.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Other questions? Seeing none, thank you Mayor Finch for your testimony.

BILL FINCH: Thank you very much. I appreciated it.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Sam.

SAMUEL CLARK: Next is Cameron Champlin.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): Mr. Chair, I just want to know what Senator Witkos is doing with all that flame going through his picture there. What is he cooking? Is it dinner for the rest of us?

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): The hearings going into the dinner hour, so as the chef of the house, I gotta continue to do my duty.

REP. RUTIGLIANO (123RD): There's a lot of steam going on over there, Senator?

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Well, you know, we're at the fry stage. So, you know, but I don't want to hold up our hearing any longer. Continue.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Oh, the General Law Committee. Do we have Mr. Champlin?

SAMUEL CLARK: Cameron Champlin disappeared somehow.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Do you want you want to go to the next person Sam, and we can--

SAMUEL CLARK: Yeah. I'll figure out what's going on with Cameron and then--so Jay More.

JAY MORE: All right. Do you get me? I see me.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): You're on.

JAY MORE: Oh, very good. Thank you. Good evening Chairman D'Agostino, Maroney Ranking Members Witkos, Rutigliano and all Members of General Law Committee. My name is Jay More and I represent Local 777, Plumbers and Pipefitters. I've been in the plumbing industry and pipe fitting industry for 28 years. I'm a licensed journeyman plumber I possess a P-2. I'm a licensed journeyman pipe fitter who possesses an S-2. I also possess a medical gas and vacuum installer license, which is an MG-2 which allows me to install life saving devices in hospitals.

I've been a member of the State of Connecticut Plumbing and Piping Examining Board for five years. I also sit on the Joint Apprenticeship Committee for Local 777 Plumbers and Pipefitters. So, I'm not

going to beat a dead horse. Chairman, you know, you said your piece, you don't need to hear any more horror stories about what goes on and how bad it is. We know it's a dangerous industry. We know things go bad, there's been explosions at clean energy, we know the VA hospital was a--major steam explosion was to the lack of experience in steam. You know, there's the L'Ambiance Plaza, so we're not going to beat that dead horse.

I think the concern is with this Bill, is the dilution of the standards of our licensing in Connecticut. Our training is the Gold Standard. The Gold Seal as everyone said, right? So, I'm also an organizer. So, I travel the country, okay. And one of my jobs is to recruit workers for the UA. So, my job is to go out there and check their work and see if they fit the mold for the UA. If their work is up to caliber, and I'll be honest with you, in Connecticut, we have the most skilled trained workers in the country and I've been all over the country. And I've been on a lot of job sites.

I've been to Texas, Arizona Tucson. I've been to everywhere in between. And I've been on major job sites, big ones, small ones. And I could say Connecticut is the Gold Standard. So, with that being said, I'm not going to drag this on, I think I'm going to reiterate what Joe Toner said and Dave Roche. Showing the equivalent education and training standard in Connecticut, approval by the boards and passing the exam is acceptable.

There's really not much to it, we just don't want people coming--and I'm gonna repeat what everyone else said. Codes aren't the same everywhere. Texas isn't the same. Florida is not the same. The sand is different. You know, underground piping is installed differently in Florida than it is in Connecticut. Can that person be trained to do it? Yes, he can. May he need a class to do it? Yes, he does.

So, if we offer them that opportunity, give them the class. Yeah, sure. They could come to Connecticut with the license. So, what I really feel they need to do is they need to show an equivalent education of job site training and schooling. The board needs to hear that, they need to discuss it and approve it. And if they do, then so be it. They take the exam.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Hey Jay, I think we're on the same page is the question of how we get there help the trades and the administration get there. Let me ask you a question. Just on that last I--your profession in particular. I don't think anybody can dispute the last point you just made about some geographical differences, particularly what we see [Inaudible].

JAY MORE: We got three people on.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Right. You know, what we just saw in Texas, right? I mean, obviously, the whole issue there was the fact that they're not ready for--

JAY MORE: They're not designed for freezing temperatures. Okay? You never hear of the problem in Connecticut when power's out for a week. It's not devastation, right? Power's off week. What do you do? You use your grill, you get a cooler you keep your food--

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): [Inaudible] whether it's point of below freezing, it didn't there.

JAY MORE: We're not devastated when we hit below freezing. Houses aren't exploding, pipes aren't blowing, our water system isn't done, our power plants aren't shut down. So that person needs to be educated.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): So, let me ask you in that vein, and again, just trying to find some areas here

where there might be some common ground. Is there-- are there regional equivalencies that might be more easily negotiated or--you've got--

JAY MORE: Yes. There are some typical--so Massachusetts and Rhode Island, very similar in the S license. So, when a person-- I'm on the plumbing board. I'm not on the heating board, but many of my business agent Mike Rosario and Cammy Champlain is on that board. So, when someone from Massachusetts comes, they have very similar training, very equivalent. The hours are the same, the on the job is the same. Our geographical area is obviously the same.

So that person gets approved, and they're allowed to take the test. Same thing with us. If our pipe fitters want to go to Rhode Island, we have them working there, they can go there, and they can take the test, and they can work in Rhode Island. Is reciprocity in the south? No, not really. It is not. But in Connecticut, we do have--we don't have with New York because they don't carry licenses, they don't carry pipe fitter licenses. So that's--

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): So, there's an example that is there an equivalency in New York, where we tell you the geography, the climate, it's obviously right next door to Connecticut, right? That's what we're trying to get at. Are there areas--and I don't need to get into this now. I'm just sort of putting this out there and Cam can probably talk about it as well, as you know, maybe there's a way to structure this so that within a certain region, there's a more streamlined approach. Somebody coming from the deep south, okay, you have to show more x, y, z, and then take the test. I don't know, but I'm trying to do it.

JAY MORE: I'm sorry to speak over you. I can't speak for all the other trades. I can't, I can only speak for plumbers and pipefitters. So, if the electricians don't feel the same way I do, if the

sheet metal don't feel the same way I do. Unfortunately, I can't speak for them. But, you know, there is reciprocity between Massachusetts, Rhode Island out right now that's license. And pretty much a plumbing license is very similar. New York, there is not that reciprocity.

We've had people come from New York, and they don't have the same schooling, they don't have an apprenticeship to a degree of pipe fitting. So, it's very difficult to know what they worked on. They don't--maybe they were residential, they never worked on steam, and they're going to come to Connecticut and get an S license. They shouldn't have an S license if they've never worked on steam. Steam is what kills people. And I hate to say that again. But that is the factor. Steam is very dangerous.

Medical gas, I mean you could be in the hospital living on life support. And I installed that life support. Do you want some clown that has no clue how to do it, but pass the book or pass the test and did it? I mean, this is a skilled hands-on trade, what we do. It's not book smart. Do you have to be educated to some degree? Yes. But it's really--it's hands on work. It's dirt under your fingernails work. But it's also intelligent. It has two components to it. It's not the education of a lawyer where you take the bar exam and you're a lawyer. You have to have on the job training, and I know you do too, in the law industry. I mean, you guys do your internships and stuff.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): I know the point you're making. Let me go to Representative Winkler. I think has a question for you.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Yes. I've actually been looking into the question about safety versus licensing. And I just had one question for you. Because I can't remember and I'd like to look up the licensing in this state. Medical gases, there was a

famous case where I guess ether was hooked up instead of oxygen in a hospital--

JAY MORE: It can happen, sir.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Accidentally killed some people. That was in Connecticut?

JAY MORE: Yes, it was. And that's why Connecticut was the first state in the country to get the license. It happened at St. Raphael's hospital, if I'm not mistaken. The patient was hooked up to nitrous oxide because the people installing it didn't have the right outlet. So, they altered one to fit. And the end result is, and I thought this was before my time, but I just know the story. The nurse was able to hook up nitrous oxide thinking it was oxygen and killed that person.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): And this was before there was a medical gases license?

JAY MORE: Correct. It wasn't a specific license. It was done under a plumbing license if I'm not mistaken.

REP. WINKLER (56TH): Thank you.

JAY MORE: Now it's in the addendum.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you Representative. Jay, let me see if I got any questions for you. And I don't see any. So, thank you for your testimony. And well, you're going to hand it off to Mr. Champlain who will bring us home, I think.

JAY MORE: Thank you for the opportunity.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thanks, Jay. Sam, can you let Cam in?

SAMUEL CLARK: Next is Cameron Champlin. He's in right now.

CAMERON CHAMPLIN: Yeah. Can you hear me?

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): You're on.

CAMERON CHAMPLIN: Thank God. Listen, I apologize. I'm old and I'm very technically challenged. I shut myself off instead of unmuting myself before. I apologize. Representative D'Agostino, Senator Maroney, Representative Rutigliano, Representative Witkos and Members of the Committee. My name is Cameron Champlin. I represent Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 777. Local 777 is comprised of approximately 3500 men and women that live and work in Connecticut.

I'm also a member of the State of Connecticut Heating and Cooling Licensing board. And you have my written testimony. So, I don't want to belabor this any longer. I'd like to answer a few questions that were asked before and Representative D'Agostino, you're asking how--I think you asked how this system works. Now, if somebody from New York comes. And I know on my board, I only answer for the heating and cooling board. If somebody comes from a state where they don't have licensing, they have to prove that they have the experience. Now on the heating board, we have a number of different licenses.

The S-2 license is unlimited, you can do everything. If somebody comes from another state, and say they only did hot water heat, they can't get the S-2 license because that include refrigeration, air conditioning and so forth. But if they've only done a certain thing, we do have a limited License. We don't deny them, we'll tell them they're qualified for this license or that license.

If they're not completely qualified for any of those licenses, we do refer them to the Department of Labor, when then they are evaluated by the Department of Labor. And they are told what more education they need. And there's classes they can

take and they tell them how to do it. So, we're not trying to keep anybody out. We do what we have to do to make sure that they have a chance to come in here and work.

Also, on the--going back now, when I first got on the board, we looked at every single application that came in. And that was before the North Carolina case. After the North Carolina case, it was cut back and the Department said that they'd have to do it themselves. We did negotiate an MOU with the department. It still kept the boards involved, but not as deeply as it was before. But the Commissioner always had the right to override the decision. We just gave them what we call--we gave him direction or we gave him an idea of what we thought should happen. It was up to the Commissioner, whether it went through or whether they wanted to overrule us.

And there was another question on how fast can we turn around if somebody does come to this state? If they come to this state, they can actually get it done in two weeks. I think 30 days is a very rare thing. But we can do it in two weeks. When we came up with this idea from the department. I showed the Department of Consumer Protection said it takes too long for somebody to apply to the board with an application and then by the time we meet again, that they might have missed the opportunity to work.

We did say, look we can meet every week if we have to so we can look at these applications. He didn't want that. They said that's too cumbersome. We can do it within the department. And they did that for a while. Then it got back to what we have now. If somebody comes in, and they don't have whatever experience they have, that is reviewed by a member of the DOL, a member of the DCP and a member of one of the appropriate boards.

They are looked at and the decision is made whether to determine whether they can sit for the test, or whether they are denied. And as you heard before,

there's almost 1200 applications like that there was only 11 that were denied. So, I think that covers about everything except--I did say I know maybe we can come to some kind of a decision. But we're really doing what the Bill is asking now in my opinion.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): I guess that's my point. I guess it cuts both ways. You could say we're doing it now. Do we need to have a Bill and the other argument is, well, this is just kind of fine? What we're doing now what's the harm? So, I'm trying to find that middle ground if there's a way to say okay, here's a process that seems to be working and we can maybe structure it in statute or regulations or both, that is these three mind and sets forth those roles and the time frame, etc. Will that work for everybody? Maybe it won't, but that's kind of what I'm trying to explore here.

CAMERON CHAMPLIN: I can only talk for us, for Local 777 and our feeling is, if that's done, that's fine. The only thing we don't agree with is just letting somebody come in and, and have what we call really reciprocity is you have a license, we're going to give you a license. We have our apprentices that go through a four or five year program, when they already done with their apprenticeship, they get a completion letter but they have to sit for the test to prove that the knowledge that they have--the knowledge they gained over their apprenticeship, they still know what to do.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): And we did ask today about them in the testing languages in there. And we did ask today about just having the test and removing the department's discretion to waive it. You know, it's still part of the process. There seem to be a willingness to consider that on the administration side.

CAMERON CHAMPLIN: Yes. I'm willing to sit down and--
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REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): I'll ask you to think about that last point I asked Jay, which is, are there very limited areas and limited licenses from particular parts of the country where if there really is true equivalency, and we have that already, maybe we go that in as well, if even if it's limited to a Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and whatever might be where we know, the same geographic issues are dealt with, the same training is involved in that sort of thing. And we share a common border.

So, you know there's I think, a desire to maybe have that more of an open process. That's something else that I'll ask you just to think about. But let me let me go to Senator Witkos, he's finishing his dinner, he's got a question for you. I'll put the steaks.

CAMERON CHAMPLIN: When I shut myself off, I said, Okay, I don't have to worry about him.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): No, actually I was glad you got yourself back on Cam.

CAMERON CHAMPLIN: Thank you Senator.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): So, I agree that two weeks is a very reasonable for the contracting boys. I know you're speaking for Lucky Seven. And to review the applicant, but you know, I'm thinking as a backstop, 30 days is kind of what I'll be thinking about, as we discussed this Bill going forward, that the contracting boards or standards boards don't look at it within 30 days, they get to take their test. But you didn't talk about a little bit about the spouses of military veterans. And I'd like to hear a little bit about that, from you.

CAMERON CHAMPLIN: I'm 100% in favor of doing whatever we can for the veterans. And I do believe that they should be treated very fairly when they

come up, if they're gonna move here. And I'm sure they know ahead of time, but they could even apply ahead of time so they know what they have to do when they get here. But my only problem is just giving them a license.

I wouldn't want one of them in my home working on a gas burner or whatever, if I don't know they're qualified. So, I still think we have to do something to qualify them. But as I said Senator, we do have some licenses. So, we will say you can't work here. But instead of working on high pressure steam because you don't have anything, maybe you can do hot water systems, because you worked on hot water system some ways you get an S-4 license instead of an S-2.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): I know that we asked the Commissioner, and this kind of dovetails into what Chairman D'Agostino's question was, is that we've asked the Commissioner Seagull to give us all the licenses that we have in the State of Connecticut. So, we kind of have an idea is as it accomplishes the trades. And maybe we should look at what the requirements are in Massachusetts and New York and Rhode Island, because we heard from, I think it was Dave, and Joe's testify that their guys are working out in New York right now.

So, do we want to make sure that we're not more restrictive than the other states? So, if you know they're in a similar boat that they their folks if whatever the company is, we can all work together in the region. I mean, what do you think about regionalization for licensures?

CAMERON CHAMPLIN: Because we're in the same geographical area I don't think that's something we could look into. What New York is--I think Dave said, and Joe Toner said, New York doesn't have licenses. They have like--they have a license at say Putnam County, and they have licenses in the city, which I think are--I think they are controlled by

the fire departments. So, you don't say we'd have to look at that because they don't have statewide licensing in New York.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Right. I remember him testifying. It's local area or local license, but it's something I think we should look at when we talk about--the example came up when Johnny Dach was talking about the glass board licensing that were the only state in Connecticut that requires it. I know it affects some people, but do we really-- should we be requiring people to get a license when we're the only state in the country that requires that, and I think that's the mission of this Committee is to make sure we maintain safety standards for everybody.

Make sure everybody's qualified in order to get this license, but in the same respect understand the fact that things have changed even construction has changed from it. And I'm not going to pretend to know anything about construction, from balloon construction to other types of construction when building homes or commercial buildings and the different codes.

So, I just want to say thank you, for willing to always be a willing participant to serve on whatever task force there is or commission. It's always good to have an open dialogue. And I think that's important. Because if you're not willing to talk about something, then, you know, it really kind of ties our hands.

CAMERON CHAMPLIN: I agree, we have to have dialogue with no matter who we are or what we're doing. We can have different ideas of how to get there. But we should all be looking at the same thing. And looking to get to the same place somehow.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Absolutely. Thank you. That's all the questions I have Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thank you Senator. All right then. Probably a wonderful note to end on. And I think we will end on that note. So, Cam, thank you for your testimony. Sam, I don't think we have anybody else left. Right?

SAMUEL CLARK: That's it.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Okay.

CAMERON CHAMPLIN: Thank you very much for letting me testify today.

REP. D'AGOSTINO (91ST): Thanks for bringing us home Cam. Committee Members will have meetings next week. We have a meeting on Thursday. As I mentioned in my email, a brief meeting at 9 just to just to vote to draft some Bills that enjoyed bipartisan support. You'll have a chance to up and down votes on those Bills once they're drafted. But I'll ask support just to get the Bills drafted.

We'll go into the public hearing. The Senate is obviously in session on Thursday. Plan right to start the public hearing, adjourn, in advance of the Senate going in, and then we will pick up the public hearing again next Tuesday. These are the last set of Bills we have for public hearing. And this will be the last public hearings for the year. So, we do want to get started on Thursday and ask your indulgence for that.

But I appreciate people may have to bounce in and out. And then obviously we will adjourn for the day on Thursday at noon when the senate convenes. We can be back on Tuesday, and you'll get a notice for that. So that's what's happening. And hopefully we'll have some Bill language to vote on very soon on some of the various Bills that we've considered. But we are almost done with the public hearing. So, thank you. Any comments from Committee Members? Seeing none, thank you everybody. I appreciate it. Thanks for your patience today.

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GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE

February 23, 2021
1:30 P.M.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you.