



Friday, March 26, 2021

RE: Testimony regarding Senate Bill 885 An Act Implementing The Governor's Budget Recommendations for General Government.

Good morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Cindi Bigelow and I am the President and CEO of Bigelow Tea in Fairfield, Connecticut. I would like to testify concerning S.B. 885 An Act Implementing The Governor's Budget Recommendations for General Government.

I am one of the proud members of the Governor's Workforce Council (GWC) and have been very honored to play a small role in their efforts. As a lifelong resident of Connecticut, it was my love for the state that led me to join the GWC. As I'm sure you are aware, the primary goal of the GWC and the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) is to ensure that Connecticut develops the most accessible, equitable, and high-quality workforce in the country.

When I heard Governor Lamont first speak to his intentions for creating the GWC and OWS, he was traveling throughout Connecticut, talking to various organizations and businesses about his desire to build a stronger workforce within the state. He spoke about his desire for Connecticut to do a better job connecting the needs of the state with the amazing organizations that are available within it. His messaging was simple: communication and connections are key in driving a successful workforce.

This is one of the biggest potential benefits of the Office of Workforce Strategy and Governor's Workforce Council: to provide those connections and help position Connecticut to be a more productive and vibrant state.

The OWS's strategic plan that was released in Oct 2020 speaks to that sole purpose: to lift as many Connecticut residents' quality of life by identifying our most significant issues, connecting organizations with the ability and desire to help, and working on practical and essential initiatives to resolve them.

I hope the GWC and the OWS will be given the opportunity to pursue their vision with the support of our legislation. All of us on these committees are aligned with our state legislators to do everything within our power to make Connecticut the best state possible, and I believe the game plan established by the GWC and OWS is truly our best and most positive path forward.

Best Regards,

Cindi Bigelow
President & CEO
Bigelow Tea

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Good morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Paul Schenfeld, and I am the Chief Financial Officer of Bigelow Tea in Fairfield Connecticut, I would like to testify concerning S.B. 885 An Act Implementing The Governor's Budget Recommendations for General Government.

As I am sure you are aware, the primary goal of the Governor's Workforce Council (GWC) and the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) is to ensure that Connecticut develops the most accessible, equitable, and high-quality workforce in the country. As someone who has participated in several of the Governor's Workforce Council meetings, I have seen firsthand the power that the OWS is having in not only executing on these objectives, but also on engaging with businesses, educators, and community organizations to build, a more agile and coordinated workforce.

Section 11 of S.B. 885, outlines the creation and the codification of the Office of Workforce Strategy under the leadership of the Chief Workforce Officer of Connecticut. I am very supportive of the responsibilities of the OWS and Chief Workforce Officer and look forward to seeing the initiatives of the Governor's Workforce Council come to fruition over the next few years.

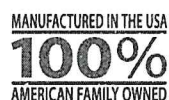
Best regards,



Paul Schenfeld
Chief Financial Officer
Bigelow Tea

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