



**Public Hearing Testimony of
Kurt Westby, Commissioner
Department of Labor
Appropriations Committee
March 26, 2021**

Good Morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Minor, Representative France and members of the Appropriations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with testimony regarding **Senate Bill No. 885 - AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENERAL GOVERNMENT**. My name is Kurt Westby and I am the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Labor (DOL).

I am here to speak in support of this bill, which creates the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) to coordinate the state's implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and staff the Governor's Workforce Council.

This bill also designates the OWS Executive Director as the Chief Workforce Officer and the Governor's principal advisor on workforce policy. The Chief Workforce Officer is tasked with setting and coordinating a unified state strategy on workforce. OWS, in conjunction with DOL and the Office of Policy and Management, will coordinate measurement and evaluation of outcomes across education and workforce development programs. OWS will assist the Department of Economic and Community Development to meet the workforce needs of the state's businesses and align members of the workforce system, including state agencies, educational institutions, and private employers. OWS will also work with the Labor Commissioner and the Governor's Workforce Council to facilitate communication and the exchange of information between the boards, state agencies, and all stakeholders involved in employment and training.

DOL stands ready to support Governor Lamont and his vision for a statewide workforce system that is responsive to the demands of our economy and maximizes the potential of our workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I am available to answer any questions you may have.