



Testimony of Ashley Zane
Government Affairs Associate, CBIA
Before the Appropriations Committee
Hartford, CT
March 26, 2021

Testifying in support of:

SB 885: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENERAL GOVERNMENT

My name is Ashley Zane and I am a Government Affairs Associate for CBIA, the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA is Connecticut's largest business organization, with thousands of member companies, small and large, representing a diverse range of industries from across the state. Ninety-five percent of CBIA member companies have 100 or fewer employees.

I am here in support of SB 885, An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for General Government. CBIA, along with our k-12 education focused affiliate organization ReadyCT, support the Governor's efforts to create a system that recognizes the importance of proper alignment of k-12, post-secondary education, and workforce needs by codifying in state statute the Office of Workforce Strategies in Section 11.

CBIA supports the creation of the Office of Workforce Strategy, "OWS", as it coordinates efforts between state agencies, workforce development boards, and educational institutions. For example, each of the state's five workforce development entity boards seek and obtain large sums of money to operate valuable programs. However, these efforts are often developed in silos with little to no strategic collaboration with other boards. In fact, the boards often find themselves in competition for funds. The OWS would ensure regional efforts are coordinated and aligned within a strategic framework in order to maximize federal funding, statewide benefits, and return on investments.

CBIA acknowledges the expansive and herculean charge this office is tasked with, and strongly encourages the OWS to maintain open lines of communication with entities that have institutional knowledge and a track record of successful programs.

As an entity that will interface directly with the business community to connect companies with high-quality workforce services, CBIA would like to ensure that the Chief Workforce Officer has knowledge of, and even more importantly, experience in the private sector. As an individual who will be a leader within state government focusing on crafting forward-thinking strategy, CBIA supports the Chief Workforce Officer having in depth practical knowledge of private sector innovations including, but not limited to, Industry 4.0 techniques and the ability to position Connecticut at the forefront of Hi-tech opportunities across industry sectors.

In conclusion, CBIA looks forward to the opportunity to align education and workforce needs of the state in this piece of legislation, and to continued collaboration between the business community and state government.