



Testimony of W. Wyatt Bosworth  
Assistant Counsel, CBIA  
Before the Committee on Appropriations  
Hartford, CT  
March 26, 2021

**Testifying in support of:**

**S.B. 1079: An Act Concerning Competitiveness And Labor Costs At The Connecticut Airport Authority**

My name is Wyatt Bosworth and I am assistant counsel with 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 our member companies are small businesses, with less than 100 employees.

Bradley International Airport (BDL) is a key resource for our state's businesses, both by facilitating convenient business travel and offering essential cargo connectivity. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the national aviation and airline industries, and BDL finances and passenger volumes are struggling as a result.

As CBIA works to promote commonsense, bipartisan solutions to aid business recovery from the pandemic, BDL's future success must be a part of this mission. The business community and Connecticut's economy relies on a strong and healthy BDL, and these minor changes to the retirement system will attract new airline activity to the airport.

S.B. 1079 will allow for current, unclassified employees to opt-out of the state retirement system, and all future, unclassified CAA employees be automatically enrolled into a separate, CAA-established, 401(a)-type plan. While this modest proposal only affects 30 non-union employees, it could generate millions of dollars worth of savings for the CAA and lower costs for the airlines operating at BDL.

It is CBIA's understanding that the costs associated with the State Employees Retirement System (SERS) and its fringe costs consistently put upward pressure on BDL's cost per enplaned passenger (CPE)—a metric that airlines use to compare the costliness of operating at each individual airport. Currently, BDL is lagging behind other regional airports that are able to offer their respective employees lower-cost retirement plans. If not addressed, these high fringe costs could lead airlines to avoid future expansion at BDL and could further complicate the state's economic rebound following the pandemic.

CBIA respectfully urges the passage of S.B. 1079. Thank you for your time and consideration.