



Waterbury Regional Chamber  
*driving business to business*

Testimony of Lynn Ward, President & CEO  
Waterbury Regional Chamber  
Before the Commerce Committee  
Hartford, CT  
February 25, 2025

Testifying in **support** of:

**SB:739 - An Act Concerning the Distribution Of The Sales And Use Taxes Imposed On Meals Sold By An Eating Establishment, Caterer Or Grocery Store.**

Chairwoman Hartle Chairman Meskers, Vice-Chairs Rahman and Keitt, Ranking Members Martin and Aniskovich, and distinguished members of the Commerce Committee: the Waterbury Regional Chamber, which serves 14 towns in the greater Waterbury region and represents the collective interests of 900 members in matters of public policy and economic development, strongly supports HB 6786: An Act Concerning The Hiring Ratio For Skilled Trades.

Connecticut's skilled trades workforce is aging and retiring quickly, and unfortunately entrance into the skilled trades is not keeping up with the demand. This is in part due to the restrictive 3:1 hiring ratio many skilled trades companies have been held to. Making this change would allow small trades companies across the state to hire hundreds to thousands of new apprentices to fill the void of an aging workforce. Students and young skilled workers looking to make a career in the skilled trades are severely hampered by the 3:1 ratio, leaving them out of work and trades companies spending more time and resources on job sites. This bill doesn't just help support workforce development within the skilled trades, but it also supports several of the initiatives the state is currently taking on. Connecticut is in need of new housing construction, upgrades to our energy reliability grid, and upgrades to our infrastructure. Investing in these areas is great, but if we don't have the skilled workforce to perform these job responsibilities, we simply can't move forward with them. Adjusting the ratio to 1:1 is a direct investment not just in the skilled trades workforce, but more importantly our state's housing, energy, and infrastructure needs. By adjusting a 1:1 ratio the state will enable more apprentices to enter the

workforce, reduce construction project timelines and costs, improve access to high-paying jobs in a quickly evolving industry, and ensure a sufficient workforce to reach housing, climate, and infrastructure goals. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 6786 and we encourage the committee to support its passage.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynn Ward". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Lynn Ward  
President & CEO