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STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL NO. 7090  
PUBLIC ACT NO. 07-239

DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2007

TIME: 5:00 P.M.

HELD AT: MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
CHAPMAN HALL MULTIPURPOSE ROOM  
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT

Reporter: JACQUELINE V. McCAULEY, RPR, CSR  
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APPEARANCES:

HON. JOAN McDONALD, COMMISSIONER  
CT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

DR. STANLEY McMILLEN, ECONOMIST  
CT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

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MR. McMILLEN: Good evening, Ladies

2 and gentlemen. Thank you for coming to the second  
3 strategic plan forum. My name is Stan McMillen. I'm  
4 the chief economist at the Department of Economic and  
5 Community Development. Please excuse my voice. I  
6 have a cold. It seems to be moving from my head to my  
7 throat back to my nose. We're going to run as long as  
8 we need to run tonight. I'm going to go through a  
9 brief slide presentation. Our commissioner, Joan  
10 McDonald, will be joining us later so let's get  
11 started.

12 The agenda for the forum is to make  
13 the introductions which is basically myself  
14 Commissioner McDonald. I want to briefly discuss the  
15 Public Act 07-239, which initiated the task to create  
16 an economic strategic plan for the state. I want to  
17 go over the purpose of these forums, what we're trying  
18 to accomplish, and then I want to sort of set the  
19 ground rules for the public comment process. What we  
20 hoped would happen tonight, and I don't know if  
21 anybody's in the room, but in order to set the stage  
22 and the context for the strategic plan, we want the  
23 RPAs, the regional planning agencies, to present a  
24 comprehensive economic development strategy so that  
25 the people in this region understand the hard work

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1 that went into those plans, and that we recognize that  
2 going forward we need to take account of those plans  
3 and the strategic plan as well as the plan of

4 conservation and development.

5                   However, tonight we understand that  
6 the regional planning agencies that would focus on  
7 this region either are not here or are not prepared.  
8 Hopefully they will come to another forum and present  
9 their sets. In the last session of the legislature  
10 Public Act 07-239 section 4 established requirements  
11 to create an economic strategic plan. By July 1, 2009  
12 and every 5 years after that we need to prepare and  
13 update a strategic economic plan for the state. As  
14 part of the development of this plan, the Department  
15 of Economic and Community Development is hosting  
16 forums around the state. There are 10 of them. For  
17 your information, and others who may be unable to  
18 attend, the schedule, the dates, and the times and the  
19 locations and directions are on our website,  
20 [www.decd.org](http://www.decd.org). This plan will serve as a roadmap for  
21 the next 5, 10, 15 and 20 years.

22                   The law requires that the plan  
23 establish clear and measurable goals and objectives  
24 for the state and its regions, and it requires that  
25 the plan establishes relevant performance measures,

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1 and report annually on the progress. The purpose of  
2 the forums is to engage in an open dialogue, to  
3 specify issues and concerns, and identify strategies  
4 to move Connecticut's economy forward, and we hope

5 that you come to these forums with your highest  
6 aspirations for the state.

7 We ask you to envision a Connecticut  
8 different from today, and, for example, suppose we  
9 were to envision that we want Connecticut to have the  
10 best education system in the country or the best  
11 transportation system in the country or the most  
12 affordable housing in the country. We don't  
13 necessarily have to imagine what it would take to get  
14 that or how much it would cost. We simply have to try  
15 to envision a different state of affairs than what we  
16 have today.

17 So I encourage you to express what  
18 your vision for a better Connecticut might be. The  
19 factors that affect Connecticut today and the future  
20 are its competitiveness, the cost of doing business  
21 under which we have a regulatory environment, energy  
22 costs, a tax structure, local and state tax structure,  
23 housing, transportation, work force and responsible  
24 growth and development. So these are the areas that  
25 if you imagine a vision, if you could classify it into

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1 one of these categories.

2 I imagine building a strategic plan  
3 as sort of a three-legged stool. We need to  
4 understand where we are, and we need to understand  
5 where we want to go, and then we can create a process  
6 to get there. So the first part of our exercise is to  
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7 build this vision. We're going to be working with a  
8 team of consultants to help us create an analysis of  
9 the status quo, where we are, how we got here. It  
10 requires lots of data. A lot of the work has already  
11 been done. You've heard of the CIRC benchmark. I've  
12 written a paper with some other economists. There's  
13 lots of data out there that describes where we are and  
14 how we got here. What we need your input for is to  
15 create a vision of where we want to be 5, 10, 15, 20  
16 years in the future.

17 The difficult job is then to figure  
18 out how to get from where we are to where we want to  
19 go. This requires a detailed plan, accountabilities,  
20 resources required, milestones and matrix, measurable  
21 performance outcomes along the way, because I could  
22 imagine if I was a legislator or the Governor, as we  
23 go along and they ask how are we doing, we better be  
24 able to say how we're doing, and we need feedback from  
25 the public along the way.

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1 As you can tell, Jackie here is  
2 recording every word that's said. If we have RPAs  
3 here, they would present their CEDS, and typically  
4 there would be more than one, because there are seven  
5 RPAs and 10 forums. Speakers are limited to 3 minutes  
6 and I have a timer and Jackie will ding. That'll tell  
7 you to try to wrap up your speaking. Be specific in

8 time frame and the topic, and the topic would be one  
9 of those categories that I referred to,  
10 transportation, housing, work force, competitiveness  
11 and so on, and we encourage you, as I said, before to  
12 think big with a focus on the future.

13 If you listen tonight and you get an  
14 idea outside this forum, the e-mail address is one  
15 that I respond to. So, please, if you have ideas  
16 beyond tonight, hopefully you'll be stimulated to  
17 think. This process doesn't end tonight. This  
18 process goes on at least until the end of January, and  
19 we hope to pull together everything we've learned from  
20 the public, and synthesize a vision to present to the  
21 team of analysts who will create a strategic plan.

22 I'm going to leave this slide up on  
23 the screen to illustrate the process that we're  
24 engaged in. So without further ado, as people have  
25 signed in, I would like to invite Bill Warner,

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1 director of planning for the City of Middletown, to  
2 come forward and speak.

3 MR. WARNER: Good evening. I got  
4 here a little early. Rick Kearney is going to speak  
5 first. He is also with the City of Middletown, and  
6 I'll speak after him. Thank you.

7 MR. KEARNEY: I'm Rick Kearney. I  
8 would like to just give you an economic overview of  
9 the City currently, where we are. In order to know  
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10 where we are to go, we'll need to know where we are at  
11 this point. The City of Middletown is a gateway to  
12 Middlesex County and the Lower Connecticut River  
13 Valley. Middletown is a healthy central city, and is  
14 a commercial hub of the county. With access to  
15 interstate 91, 95 and route 66 and 9, business is fine  
16 with Middletown a central location, and a great place  
17 to do business.

18 The City has experienced continued  
19 growth in both labor force and employment. I want to  
20 concentrate specifically on three major business  
21 sectors, medical and educational or, as we would call  
22 it, meds and eds, manufacturing and financial  
23 services. Middletown is a regional center for  
24 education and health care so the meds and eds is very  
25 applicable to where we are with over 290

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1 establishments as of 2005.  
2 Meds and eds brings a long-term  
3 impact to the region's economy. Middlesex Hospital  
4 was the first magnet hospital in the State of  
5 Connecticut, and is the backbone of our county health  
6 care system. The hospital operates the Shoreline and  
7 Marlborough-Middlesex Health Centers in addition to  
8 the outpatient center and the main hospital campus.  
9 Wesleyan University and Middlesex Community College,  
10 where we are tonight, are educational institutions

11 that contribute to the economic and cultural impact of  
12 the region. These institutions bring good jobs,  
13 significant payroll dollars, and attract new business  
14 enterprises.

15 The rising cost of health care  
16 alerted our department in the early 2000s. There was  
17 increased need for services that created opportunity  
18 for expansion of new facilities and health care  
19 facilities. The City identified an area between  
20 Middlesex Hospital, downtown and Saybrook Road as the  
21 Saybrook medical corridor. The medical corridor, the  
22 area which we are currently in, has experienced a  
23 significant construction boom in the past five years  
24 with over 150,000 square feet of new medical offices  
25 built in this area in the past five years and another

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1 100,000 square feet currently under construction,  
2 obviously very significant for a town this size.

3 Currently meds and eds, that's  
4 medical and educational institutions, have projects  
5 including Wesleyan University's \$250 million campus,  
6 Middlesex Hospital's \$35 million emergency room  
7 expansion --

8 MR. McMILLEN: Please continue.

9 A. And two additional office facilities  
10 totaling over 85,000 square feet in this area. I want  
11 the state to be aware of the significance of the  
12 medical and educational complex that we have here

13 within the City. It provides so much and in some ways  
14 it's so very nebulous and basic to the system.  
15 Manufacturing, the other main area to talk about  
16 tonight, produces sales of over \$1.2 billion in sales  
17 in this economy and generates over \$266 million.  
18                                 Middletown has an aerospace cluster  
19 with Pratt & Whitney -- Pratt & Whitney is here  
20 tonight and I'm sure they'll speak -- Kaman Aerospace  
21 and Aerospace Techniques. Additional manufacturing  
22 clusters includes plastics, metal forming and  
23 fabrication. The City has seen strong growth  
24 specifically in very small companies in this area.  
25 Many of our businesses are family-owned, and put a lot

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1 of their own personal time and finances into these  
2 organizations. We look for the state to specifically  
3 address workforce development.

4                                 I have numerous companies that are  
5 looking for employees in manufacturing and cannot find  
6 them. Additionally, we look for the state to supply a  
7 more regional transportation to bring employees from  
8 center cities out to these manufacturing areas. Over  
9 67 percent of our current affordable housing can be  
10 found that's in the county can be found here in  
11 Middletown.

12                                 The other area to talk briefly about  
13 is financial services and real estate. Middletown is

14 home to a large concentration of financial service  
15 companies including Liberty Bank and Middlesex Mutual  
16 Assurance. They bring a number of very strong  
17 professional employees to the area and also clients to  
18 our city. Bill Warner is going to talk in more detail  
19 about where he sees us going.

20 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you.

21 MR. WARNER: Thank you. My name is  
22 Bill Warner. I'm the director of planning and  
23 conservation and development for the City of  
24 Middletown. I've been in that position for almost 20  
25 years, and I have had the honor of working with the

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1 Chamber of Commerce the Middlesex of and Larry McHugh  
2 for that entire time, and really think that's the  
3 secret to the success of Middlesex County.

4 When we think of  
5 Middletown/Middlesex County, the Chamber is the  
6 Middlesex County Chamber, and our partnership in  
7 Middletown with the Chamber has been phenomenal. We  
8 have had tremendous success because of that. We have  
9 had success, because we really focused on a total  
10 holistic approach of quality of life. I am just as  
11 proud that we acquired over 2,000 acres of open space  
12 in the last 7 years as I am with our downtown  
13 revitalization. We have had almost 2 million square  
14 feet of commercial/industrial space and a thousand new  
15 jobs brought to the City in those same 7 years. So we

16 have looked at the entire picture. We've made  
17 environmentalists happy. We've made business people  
18 happy. We have kept everyone happy, so we have had a  
19 lot of succession.

20 I have provided written testimony in  
21 the box outside, which goes to the five growth areas,  
22 the five areas of regional and statewide significance  
23 in Middletown. Larry and the Chamber will speak  
24 specifically about Middlesex County. We envision  
25 Middletown as a central city for Middlesex County, and

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1 as Rick indicated, we see Middletown as the gateway to  
2 the Lower Connecticut River Valley. That's why we're  
3 like -- the arches of the Arrigoni Bridge, as you come  
4 into Middletown, you will see the arches of the  
5 bridge. All you have to do is step out the door here,  
6 and you'll see the arches of that bridge and imagine  
7 them lit up. We look to the state to help us speed  
8 along at that process. It's all funded. We need some  
9 help moving it along.

10 We see Middletown locally as a  
11 thriving college down on the banks of the Connecticut  
12 River. The five growth areas I talk about, first of  
13 all, is the Aetna property. As you know, Aetna has  
14 relocated its activities, except for its computers, to  
15 Hartford. That opens up 263 acres in the center of  
16 the richest state in the nation with direct highway

17 access to the north and south right on 91; tremendous  
18 opportunity. We know some type of high-density, mixed  
19 use development is of statewide significance  
20 certainly. We also look to see some kind of  
21 transportation action with the Metro-North corridor  
22 that's being discussed in Meriden. We see that  
23 tremendous potential, but we need the state to help us  
24 to create something that really benefits the State of  
25 Connecticut.

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1 The second area is a smaller one.  
2 Our Remington Rand factory, the City took over the  
3 property called Remington Rand, a 284,000 square-foot  
4 industrial facility. We have 120,000 square feet of  
5 vacant space in it. If we are making money with it,  
6 the money goes into the economic development fund, but  
7 we are looking for the state to move along the  
8 environmental remuneration. That property could  
9 create a real incubator for new businesses, lots of  
10 jobs, and we have a corporation that has accepted the  
11 responsibility. We just spent about five years  
12 working with them to get it done. We need DECD to get  
13 DEP to get it done.

14 Our 13 industrial is where Pratt &  
15 Whitney is, our best corporation right here on the  
16 river. We also have the NRG power plant there and a  
17 power plant, 520 megawatt gas-fired power plant under  
18 construction there, so that will be our largest

19 taxpayer, largest area. We look to have access to  
20 that area. So to help -- for the state to help us  
21 topographically, it's a little challenging. There are  
22 some areas that can be developed for future access to  
23 that.

24 Finally, the downtown riverfront.  
25 Our downtown -- we envision our downtown, as we said,

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1 the central city to Middlesex County. For our  
2 downtown to survive, to really thrive, we need to  
3 repopulate the middle and upper income people. As I  
4 spelled out in my written testimony, we need DECD to  
5 create upscale housing in the downtown area.  
6 Everybody is starting to learn the central part of the  
7 city can't have all affordable housing. We need some  
8 other housing downtown.

9 Our riverfront, there's a huge  
10 opportunity there, 85 acres on the river, 3,000 feet  
11 of water frontage, about 2,000 feet of highway  
12 frontage, direct highway access, center of the richest  
13 state in the nation, tremendous potential right on the  
14 Connecticut River, certainly a development of  
15 significance for the state. We have a developer in  
16 place, things we need to do. So we need to work with  
17 the state and the DECD to move along the DEP, to move  
18 along moving our sewage treatment plant out of there,  
19 and work with the DOT to put in the highway

20 interchange they have designed and we have designed so  
21 that the area has direct highway access. We need to  
22 move the DOT along with that project.

23 So as I summarize, my written  
24 testimony goes through all of those growth areas, and  
25 I think all of those growth areas have a lot more

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1 impact than just great economic benefit to the City of  
2 Middletown. We are in the center of the state. All  
3 highways lead to Middletown, and we really have  
4 something going in our downtown and riverfront is  
5 going to attract people from all over the region.  
6 Thank you very much.

7 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you.

8 MR. CRETARO: I'm Ron Cretaro,  
9 executive director of the Connecticut Association of  
10 Nonprofits, a statewide organization of more than 500  
11 not-for-profit organizations. According to the 2007  
12 National Center for Charitable Statistics data,  
13 Connecticut has nearly 20,000 nonprofit organizations,  
14 a 25 percent increase from 10 years ago. Close to  
15 14,000 of the nonprofits are classified as 501(c)(3)  
16 organizations or charities established for  
17 educational, charitable and philanthropic purposes.  
18 Of those 14,000, approximately 7,000 file 990 forms  
19 signifying their annual revenue of \$25,000 or greater.

20 According to the 990 forms, those  
21 7,000 nonprofits are reported to have \$26 billion in

22 terms of revenue annually and \$74 billion in assets  
23 respectively. Further, the Connecticut nonprofit  
24 sector employs 165,000 individuals representing close  
25 to 12 percent of the state's workforce, according to

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1 2004 state Department of Labor data. I would venture  
2 to say once more current data is available, that  
3 percentage will have increased. Needless to say,  
4 nonprofit organizations in Connecticut are an economic  
5 force, one that is rarely acknowledged, and I would  
6 hope that the nonprofit sector will merit mention in  
7 your report.

8                   It is important to know that we are  
9 also businesses, and that we need to maintain a  
10 positive bottom line or surplus in order to survive  
11 and flourish. The major portion of my testimony that  
12 I have submitted focuses on state funded  
13 not-for-profits, ones created and fostered and  
14 inspired by state legislative action. These are  
15 nonprofits that the State of Connecticut has turned to  
16 and relied on to help fulfill its mission and make its  
17 commitment to its citizens.

18                   Nonprofits are often commended for  
19 their contribution as a safety net which provides  
20 valuable services to the state's residents, but rarely  
21 are these organizations cited for the economic  
22 contributions they make to the state's overall

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23 economic vitality and success, and I've gone on to  
24 outline how nonprofits more specifically contribute to  
25 the economy in terms of the services that they

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1 purchase, goods and services they purchase, and  
2 services that they utilize for everything from  
3 construction to legal and accounting and landscaping,  
4 etc., and nonprofits do pay taxes. While nonprofits  
5 are exempt from property taxes and in some cases sales  
6 tax, many nonprofits do pay local property taxes and  
7 sales taxes. Also, nonprofit employees pay taxes,  
8 federal and state income tax, Social Security and  
9 directly or indirectly, through mortgage or rent,  
10 local property taxes.

11 I have not -- I'm lacking specific  
12 data, but I contend more jobs in Connecticut have been  
13 created directly in the nonprofit sector by  
14 legislative action in the past five years than in any  
15 other sector of the economy except perhaps  
16 construction due to the state bonding package, and I  
17 have provided you a list of over 25 initiatives that  
18 state departments have undertaken through legislative  
19 initiatives, which amount to millions and millions of  
20 dollars in the last five years.

21 You'll find that there's an  
22 astounding number of jobs which have resulted in the  
23 nonprofit sector from these expenditures, and I've  
24 given one instance of 40 new adolescent group homes

25 that have been created through funding for the

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1 Department of Children and Families. Each of those 40  
2 group homes employ 20 people, a total of 800 employees  
3 just in that one initiative. The problem being that  
4 while many of the jobs being created in the nonprofit  
5 sector are as a result of the state funding  
6 initiatives, they are lower wage jobs which fail to  
7 meet most any self-sufficiency standard that is  
8 applied to state policy leaders.

9 Nonprofit jobs, or the overwhelming  
10 number of jobs the legislature itself has created, are  
11 low wage jobs, and do not allow nonprofit employees of  
12 nonprofit organizations to pay for the basics of life  
13 nor for them to earn a wage sufficient to support a  
14 family and particularly employees of nonprofit  
15 organizations cannot afford to live in the community  
16 in which they work especially in towns and cities in  
17 Fairfield County.

18 Connecticut has begun making major  
19 investments into critical infrastructure issues such  
20 as early childhood education with the aim of  
21 developing a competitive and quality workforce for the  
22 future, higher education towards keeping more of our  
23 graduating Connecticut students in-state and providing  
24 a highly skilled workforce; housing, both supported,  
25 and smart growth and land use initiatives in order to

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1 protect and ensure an excellent quality of life,  
2 economic development in our urban areas to create jobs  
3 and spur growth; transportation, to enable economic  
4 growth and health care by increasing Medicaid rates  
5 and gradually beginning to address those without  
6 insurance. More is required, however, and it still  
7 has matters waiting to be addressed. Among the  
8 greatest needs are the growing income inequality,  
9 providing health care for all uninsured both aimed at  
10 building the middle class and moving people out of  
11 poverty.

12 MR. McMILLEN: Paul Rosin.

13 MR. ROSIN: Good afternoon. My name  
14 is Paul Rosin. I'm the executive director of  
15 Community Residences Incorporated based out of  
16 Southington. We also provide extensive services in  
17 the Middletown and Middlesex County. My colleague,  
18 Mr. Cretaro, has given you a lot of numbers. I just  
19 want to fill in-between the spaces about what it is  
20 the not-for-profit sector does do. Basically  
21 Community Residences Corporation is a multi-service  
22 nonprofit agency that provides services to over 500  
23 people employees, 750 individuals, with a budget \$32  
24 million, a majority of that coming from the state and  
25 federal government.

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1 Nonprofits are providing a variety  
2 of services that are really designed to be able to  
3 support people that have housing needs, have  
4 rehabilitative needs, have issues with juvenile  
5 justice issues, with mental retardation and habitation  
6 needs. These services really can be very defining.  
7 Three different ways are preventative, which I think,  
8 as far as this commission is looking at it, is  
9 probably one of the most important thing.

10 Right now the major emphasis in the  
11 state is on education. In order for children to be  
12 able to be successful in education they need to be  
13 able to come to school prepared. Many of our agencies  
14 that work with children, that is their main thrust is  
15 whether it be early intervention services, support  
16 services, foster care services, in home support  
17 services. These are all types of services that are  
18 essential to those children being able to be  
19 successful in the educational process.

20 If we have children that are coming  
21 to schools that have not been properly taken care of,  
22 not been properly prepared for school, the chances of  
23 their succeeding are much, much lower than another  
24 child that comes from an environment where they have  
25 been properly prepared for school. So I think that if

1 the State of Connecticut is looking forward in the  
2 next 5, 10, 15, 20 years, that is an essential area  
3 they need to be looking at. So prevention is  
4 certainly a very, very big area.

5 The second area really that I think  
6 nonprofits focus on is really rehabilitation whether  
7 that means an individual coming out of prison, an  
8 individual that has been in an abusive, neglectful  
9 situation looking to be able to habilitate or  
10 rehabilitate that individual again so that he would be  
11 functioning, successful, tax paying individual within  
12 our society I think is an essential piece that the  
13 state cannot lose. So the second thing is  
14 rehabilitation and habitation. The third thing is  
15 really support services.

16 We have many individuals in our  
17 society that need ongoing support, and I think that  
18 the not-for-profit sector provides high quality at a  
19 cost-effective manner. The last thing I would just  
20 like to briefly touch on is something that I think Ron  
21 started to talk about is really inequality between the  
22 public and private sector in terms of not-for-profit  
23 sectors. Right now there's about a 50 percent gap  
24 between worker pay and our state employees as opposed  
25 to our nonprofit employees in providing the same

1 services, and, again, I think over the long term I  
2 think that this may be an opportunity both ways.

3 I think that right now the state  
4 should be one to be able to raise revenues, set  
5 regulations, and monitor license services, and should  
6 look at over the next 5, 10, 15 or 20 years to get out  
7 of direct care, and just be in the area of providing  
8 funding for those services, regulations to guide those  
9 services, and quality to ensure that the dollars be  
10 spent in the right way. Thank you very much.

11 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you, Paul.  
12 Craig Lavazza? Am I saying that correctly? Craig  
13 from ConnDOT? James Ieronian.

14 MR. IERONIAN: Handwriting is not my  
15 strong suit, sorry.

16 MR. McMILLEN: I apologize.

17 MR. IERONIAN: I'm sorry. My name  
18 is James Ieronian, and I am the executive director of  
19 the United Way of Meriden-Wallingford, but I am also  
20 the vice chair of the Workforce Alliance, which is the  
21 workforce board for South Central Connecticut, and I'm  
22 a member of the Campaign for a Working Connecticut.  
23 The Campaign for a Working Connecticut is a coalition  
24 with an aligned vision for Connecticut, and that's why  
25 we want to talk about workforce development as part of

1 the strategic plan.

2 We believe we need to promote the  
3 state's economic competitiveness through the  
4 development of sustainable, effective workforce  
5 solutions in order to increase worker skills and  
6 advance families to self sufficiency, and that's how  
7 we got involved in this. I'm here today to urge you  
8 to include in your strategic plan long term  
9 investments specifically geared toward workforce  
10 development.

11 Connecticut's economic success  
12 ultimately will depend on its ability to consistently  
13 produce a highly skilled workforce with the kinds of  
14 basic and technical skills needed for the 21st Century  
15 and for that economy. With an increasing number of  
16 jobs in this state requiring a college degree,  
17 barriers to employment and advancement up the career  
18 ladder are substantial today for those with limited  
19 skills. Without these skills many of these  
20 individuals will be stuck in low wage work in the dual  
21 economy of Connecticut.

22 As much as 40 percent of Tom's  
23 available workforce lives in the state's major cities,  
24 and many are living and learning in poverty. Just to  
25 a point, 29 percent of Connecticut residents lack a

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1 post secondary education. We're always very proud at  
2 saying how many of our students graduate college, but  
3 we need to also recognize the 29 percent that don't

4 have any college experience. 32 percent of employers  
5 report that poor reading and writing skills are among  
6 the most serious skill deficiencies of current hourly  
7 production employees, and most telling for family  
8 sustainability is self sufficiency. An individual  
9 needs to earn \$19.30 an hour or hold two and a half  
10 full-time, minimum wage jobs in order to afford the  
11 average 2-bedroom apartment in Connecticut.

12 Under those conditions the needs and  
13 skills of Connecticut businesses and workers are  
14 mismatched. Investments in key workforce education  
15 and development strategies will strengthen our economy  
16 in this state by supporting workers, employers,  
17 families and ultimately their communities. The  
18 strategies outlined in the investments called for in  
19 these areas will help turn the curve, and foster a  
20 stronger match between worker skills and employer's  
21 needs. Ultimately it will also move more families  
22 toward self-sufficiency.

23 The state must make investments that  
24 supplement and fill the gaps of the federal dollars.  
25 Massachusetts currently spends \$6.54. Rhode Island

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1 spends \$16.93 per person on incumbent worker training.  
2 We in Connecticut this year currently spend 16 cents  
3 per person. That is not the message we should be  
4 sending to business if we're supposed to be providing

5 a competitive environment for their growth. The most  
6 effective way to make these investments is to link  
7 them then to an economic security development effort  
8 in your plan. Thank you very much.

9 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you. Taren  
10 McKInney.

11 MS. McKINNEY: Good afternoon. My  
12 name is Taren McKInney, and I am with the Middlesex  
13 County Chamber of Commerce where I am the director of  
14 government affairs, director of public and community  
15 relations and liaison to the Middlesex County  
16 Revitalization Committee, which is the organization I  
17 am representing here tonight.

18 A little background. At the  
19 initiative, Local Leaders, the Middlesex County  
20 Revitalization Commission was established by the State  
21 of Connecticut in 1994 to assist and coordinate  
22 economic development activity within Middlesex County.  
23 The commission is made up of the CO or appointee of  
24 the CEO of each town within Middlesex County, and the  
25 overall purpose of the commission is to stimulate and

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1 support economic development within the entire county.

2 A few ways that we do that is the  
3 promotion and coordination of economic development  
4 within the region, the retention of existing  
5 businesses, creation of new businesses, and new jobs  
6 is a big goal of ours, and just fostering a strong

7 business climate. The commission offers revolving  
8 loan which is actually funded by DECD to local  
9 businesses in order to help meet the credit needs of  
10 businesses which are unable to access traditional  
11 lending sources.

12 The revolving loan fund is  
13 specifically geared toward manufacturing and retail  
14 businesses within the county. The commission really  
15 appreciates the impact of small businesses in the  
16 region, and we want to continue working with the City  
17 of Middletown and the outlying towns within the county  
18 in order to bring more jobs and more businesses  
19 overall to Middlesex County.

20 We're looking also for a better  
21 infrastructure, maybe some public transportation, that  
22 would allow our employees to get from home to work.  
23 And speaking of home, some housing that those  
24 employees could affordably live in within the county  
25 as well.

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1 Overall, we just hope to continue  
2 assisting the small businesses, bigger loans and more  
3 of them is a goal of ours, and a big picture goal is  
4 to play a role in keeping Middlesex County and the  
5 State of Connecticut more competitive. Thank you.

6 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you. Jeff  
7 Pugliese.

8 MR. PUGLIESE: Good evening. My  
9 name is Jeff Pugliese, and I'm a staff member at the  
10 Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce. The Middlesex  
11 Chamber is the largest chamber in the state, and we  
12 have 45 councils, committees and divisions which focus  
13 individually on all areas of economic activity in the  
14 county. I personally serve as a workforce specialist  
15 for the Chamber as well as staff liaison for our  
16 Affordable Housing Committee and our Manufacturer's  
17 Council. I am here tonight to discuss some of the  
18 issues that are critical to the business community in  
19 Middlesex County.

20 We are, by definition, a county  
21 chamber and our membership stretches from the  
22 Cromwell/Portland region all the way down to the  
23 shoreline. Our office is based in Middletown, and we  
24 view the city as the flagship of our operation and the  
25 de factor capitol in Middlesex County. Middletown is

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1 becoming known as a commercial center for  
2 entertainment and retail, and we would like to enhance  
3 that image as we plan for the future.

4 A major part of this initiative is  
5 to attract more young people to the area, particularly  
6 young professionals, so the city can continue to be a  
7 vibrant center for not only Middlesex County but for  
8 the entire State of Connecticut. Having more people  
9 live comfortably in the downtown region is part of the

10 Long term strategy for the city and Chamber.  
11 Middletown is seen as a gateway to the lower part of  
12 Middlesex County which of course includes the  
13 beautiful Connecticut shoreline.

14 The shoreline has always been known  
15 as very important to the state's tourism initiatives.  
16 In fact, the Chamber firmly believes that Middlesex  
17 County, as a whole, plays a very important role  
18 regarding tourism. From the historic Goodspeed Opera  
19 House and Gillette State Park in Haddam, to the  
20 Premium Outlets and shopping centers of Clinton and  
21 Westbrook, to the classic New England towns of Essex,  
22 Chester and East Hampton, the county offers a wide  
23 ranged of opportunities to residents and visitors  
24 alike.

25 All of these issues and many others

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1 issues of focus for the Middlesex Chamber revolve  
2 around something that is of the utmost importance to,  
3 I'm sure, everyone in this room and hopefully everyone  
4 in the state and that is transportation. The City of  
5 Middletown got its name from the simple fact that it  
6 is located in the central part of the state. The city  
7 is very accessible through its proximity to interstate  
8 91, interstate 691, route 9, route 66 and route 17.

9 Middletown has serious potential to  
10 be the state's major transport hub by utilizing its

11 access to water transport routes, rail transport  
12 routes and a comprehensive busing system. The Chamber  
13 has taken the lead in such initiative as the Arrigoni  
14 Bridge project, which means to modernize the structure  
15 of the bridge which connects Middletown to Portland.  
16 This includes the installing of a new lighting system  
17 with will not only improve the aesthetic quality of  
18 the bridge, but will make it a safer and more  
19 practical roadway.

20 The Arrigoni serves as a strategic  
21 river crossing due to the fact it is the only spot to  
22 cross in Middlesex County other than the Goodspeed  
23 Bridge in East Haddam. The Chamber looks forward to  
24 working with the city and state governments on this as  
25 well as many other vital transportation issues. It is

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1 universally agreed that a modernized and improved  
2 transportation structure in the State of Connecticut  
3 will have a huge impact on economic development and is  
4 in everyone's best interests.

5 Another issue of critical importance  
6 t the Chamber is the state of manufacturing in  
7 Connecticut. With the energy costs soaring, the ever  
8 increasing cost of living, stiff international  
9 competition and a slowing economy, it is more  
10 important than ever that the state government does  
11 everything it can to create a business friendly  
12 environment for these manufacturers to operate in.

13 All too often employees of  
14 Connecticut manufacturers cannot afford to live near  
15 their place of employment due to the simple fact that  
16 they cannot afford it. This must change. The state  
17 must do everything it can to ensure that Connecticut  
18 workers can afford to live in close proximity to their  
19 job and have the flexibility to contribute to the  
20 growth of our economy.

21 The Chamber enjoys a great working  
22 relationship with the municipalities in its  
23 jurisdiction and especially with the City of  
24 Middletown. The Chamber, by nature, a business  
25 organization, but we also aim to be a community

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1 organization. We will continue to support all  
2 reasonable development activities in our member cities  
3 and towns including Portland Town Center Project and  
4 the Cromwell Development Project on route 372.

5 Maintaining and enhancing the  
6 strength of the I-91 Industrial Corridor is also of  
7 vital importance to the Middlesex Chamber. We look  
8 forward to working with the Department of Economic and  
9 Community Development and other state agencies as we  
10 drive towards the Governor's goal of smart and  
11 responsible growth in Connecticut. I just want to  
12 reiterate we look to the state to recognize  
13 Middletown's importance as a city that is centrally

14 located.

15 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you, Jeff.  
16 Bonnie DeNote, am I saying that correctly, from  
17 CONNSTEP? Bonnie? There's also Rebecca Dow from  
18 CONNSTEP.

19 MS. DeNOTE: Good evening. I'm  
20 Bonnie DeNote. I'm the president of CONNSTEP.  
21 CONNSTEP is a manufacturing resource center funded on  
22 behalf of the Department of Economic and Community  
23 Development, and we're a resource to small to medium  
24 size manufacturers throughout the State of  
25 Connecticut. We are also the federal partner for the

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1 manufacturing extension partnership on the federal  
2 level through the National Institute of Standards and  
3 Technologies. So in conjunction with our two partners  
4 we are able to do and offer services to the  
5 Connecticut manufacturers to help enable them to stay  
6 in business in the State of Connecticut. Those  
7 practices being lean manufacturing and best practices,  
8 quality improvement and environmental issues which  
9 come to our attention to help them eliminate waste.  
10 In the State of Connecticut we've been a partner since  
11 1994.

12 Originally with the university level  
13 and now through ourselves as a 501-3(c) and in  
14 conjunction with various members of the community  
15 through organizations, clusters and membership

16 organizations such as NHMA, MAC, CBIA, that we are  
17 seeing from our manufacturing clients currently is  
18 certainly someone has mentioned a few people  
19 previously tonight on workforce development. Our  
20 aerospace partners, through clusters of like the ACM,  
21 are certainly growing and have many, many needs in the  
22 booming economy throughout the state, our experience  
23 in shortages in operators, and many people throughout  
24 their shops.

25 Building the workforce development

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1 is certainly a great need, and we continue to do that  
2 through programs at the University and the community  
3 college level and training through our facility at  
4 CONNSTEP in bringing those into the shop floor. We  
5 recently had been involved with a program through the  
6 Department of Labor on the federal level that was  
7 called MOST, the Machine Operators Training Program,  
8 and actually was just written about today in the  
9 business journal, and unfortunately that program is no  
10 longer available due to the funding at the national  
11 level, which is certainly an initiative that we would  
12 look to incorporate with some funding through the  
13 state.

14 That program actually had a bus  
15 which had workers. They did not need to be incumbent  
16 workers that could be trained for a period of a 2-week

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17 program filling up the bus to make them trainable and  
18 become C and C operators. It was very successful with  
19 a very high success rate, and the program, as I said,  
20 was on a bus which traveled locally throughout the  
21 state of Connecticut, and we would get manufacturers  
22 to sign-up and commit to X amount of seats on the bus,  
23 and they would take these workers into their shop and  
24 train them, and come to the next level. So it was a  
25 continuation of training.

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1 As I said, unfortunately that  
2 program has went away. We would like to keep that  
3 going at another level whether that be on a mobile  
4 type of arrangement or in the facilities of a plant  
5 toward manufacturing as well, but certainly we do need  
6 the work for workforce as being a necessity, and also  
7 the need for people to understand best practices such  
8 as leaning out the waste in identifying waste in their  
9 shop, which eventually helps them become more  
10 efficient, have a leaner and cleaner organization  
11 which will enable them to continue to grow the bottom  
12 line and increase productivity, and keeping the  
13 business in the State of Connecticut as well as  
14 employment.

15 And we are a sponsor as part of the  
16 WCPI. We belong to the World Class Productivity  
17 Initiative through the Governor's Council, and we  
18 continue to look for best practices and challenges to

19 get that message out through the manufacturers so ...

20 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you.

21 MR. McMILLEN: Rebecca Dow.

22 MS. DOW: I'll pass.

23 MR. McMILLEN: Bob Fusani.

24 MR. FUSANI: My name is Robert

25 Fusani. I'm a member of the Real Estate Service of

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1 Connecticut. I've been involved in the residential  
2 construction industry, and I've been involved in the  
3 industry for over 53 years. I'm also the chairman of  
4 the Chamber of Commerce Affordable Housing Committee.  
5 I am really here tonight on a more personal note in  
6 addition to those things I'm a grandfather of 10, and  
7 I see that my grandchildren are probably not going to  
8 be able to stay in the state of Connecticut.

9 The issue of affordable housing has  
10 reached the level of seriousness in Connecticut. It's  
11 worse here than probably anywhere in the country. We  
12 have the distinction -- Connecticut has the  
13 distinction of losing more people between the age of  
14 18 and 35 than any other state in the country, a very  
15 dubious distinction, and it's getting worse. I heard  
16 the other day that many of our college people are  
17 staying in Connecticut, that may be true, shortly  
18 after they graduate, but they are not staying here  
19 long after that. The opportunities for jobs

20 commensurate with the cost of housing just don't  
21 exist, and being able to keep them in the state is  
22 getting harder and harder.

23 As a builder, I find it virtually  
24 impossible to build. Although we are doing a project  
25 in East Lyme that falls into that category, things

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1 prevent us from doing that is the regulatory climate,  
2 both local, state and federal, mostly local, to a  
3 certain extent the state, and the thing you can do  
4 most for us is get out of our way. I don't mean leave  
5 us alone. Just let us do our own thing. When I was  
6 23 years old, I was able to buy a new starter house.  
7 That was not unusual. I was an average guy. I was a  
8 tradesman. I didn't have a college education and I  
9 had a family, and I was able to buy a home. That is  
10 an impossibility today.

11 One of my grandchildren is 23 years  
12 old, just graduated from -- just came out of the Air  
13 Force with a great education in aircraft electronic  
14 maintenance, a great job. The best jobs in  
15 Connecticut don't pay him enough to be able to stay in  
16 Connecticut. That's a tragedy. We should be ashamed  
17 of ourselves, and there's no need for that. We can do  
18 work on this as an industry, and many of the  
19 nonprofits are attempting it, but we're meeting with  
20 resistance at every turn, endless bureaucracy, years  
21 of approval process, hundreds of thousands of dollars.

22 That really has to stop. My charge to you is find a  
23 way to stop that. Government can play a role. Its  
24 biggest role, in many cases, is to get out of our way.  
25 Thank you.

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1 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you, sir. Hugh  
2 Curley.

3 MR. CURLEY: Good evening. My name  
4 is Hugh Curley. I'm currently a business development  
5 specialist with the United States Small Business  
6 Administration out of the Connecticut district office  
7 in Hartford. Just for reference sake, I have  
8 previously worked with the Middlesex County Chambers  
9 of Commerce and director of rehabilitation. The time  
10 before Taren, I've also been economic development  
11 chair in the Town of Durham and Selectman in Durham,  
12 and worked on the Regional Institute for the 21st  
13 Century back at the end of the 20th Century, and I  
14 come really here to mostly tonight to listen, but from  
15 the Small Business Administration standpoint my  
16 director, Bernie Sweeney, was not able to be here  
17 tonight.

18 We try and be also the resource for  
19 small business growth in the state by having capital  
20 access and technical assistance for small businesses  
21 via Score and the Common Program, the Small Business  
22 Development Center which we both support, and look to

23 continue supporting and increasing the role through  
24 our office in trying to make sure the Connecticut  
25 companies get the appropriate share of government

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1 contracts either directly or as subcontractors to  
2 prime contracts.

3                   As I mentioned, Mr. Sweeney hopes to  
4 be at some of the other meetings in the future. When  
5 we look 15, 5, 10 or 20 years out, we look forward to  
6 trying to put together a plan with the DECD to be  
7 integrated so we can find out where there are areas of  
8 redundancy that we might be able to eliminate, but  
9 also to put together where there are areas of need,  
10 and see how we can be able to trace them as this whole  
11 process works its way through.

12                   On a personal level, from my  
13 experience working with the Revitalization Commission  
14 and through Durham Economic Development, one of the  
15 things I think Middlesex County has done, which is  
16 probably one of the prime examples throughout the  
17 state, is try and work cooperatively within  
18 communities. There hasn't been rating of businesses  
19 as sometimes happens especially from state to state,  
20 but it's always been troubling to me that as much as  
21 we cooperate, cooperate, cooperate, when we get to the  
22 bottom line, depending on what side of the line a  
23 business moves in on, it's winner take all on taxes.

24                   So I just think that that question  
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25 needs to be to be addressed somewhat radically,

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1 possibly in the years ahead, whether they be the 5, 10  
2 or 20-year cycle. Thank you.

3 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you, sir. Tom  
4 Morano.

5 MR. MORANO: Good evening. I'm Tom  
6 Morano. I'm a business development manager for  
7 Northeast Utilities. I've been in economic  
8 development now for about 15 years. Three of those  
9 years I worked at your agency. First of all, I would  
10 like to thank you people for coming out and doing  
11 this. It's refreshing to see the agency out engaging  
12 us, your public.

13 Tonight I want to talk about  
14 Connecticut's demographic issues specifically. We  
15 have an aging workforce, and we have an aging  
16 population, and we're going to recommend two things  
17 basically as part of your economic development plan.  
18 First thing is to commit itself to trying to attract  
19 and retain younger professionals, and we think that  
20 the state's best opportunity is with foreign-born  
21 young people who come here for educational  
22 opportunities and then they stay.

23 So I'm going to cite three studies  
24 that will back it up. First of all, the US census  
25 data tells us that we're getting older, and, for

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1 example, the ratio of households without kids to house  
2 holds with kids has gone up since the '60s from 3 to 1  
3 to currently about 5 to 1. Now, that's got the  
4 implications of lower consumer spending, higher health  
5 care costs, and we see that municipalities are going  
6 to have a lot more trouble passing budgets.  
7 Employment effects.

8 We see, we CL&P, we have a lot of  
9 trouble finding young electrical engineers, and we  
10 have a lot of trouble finding linemen especially, so  
11 all of that is starting to really show up here. The  
12 second study is from The Hartford-Springfield Economic  
13 Partnership that did a graduate retention survey. One  
14 of those findings was that about half of the college  
15 students graduating from that region saw that the  
16 region had no opportunities. That was their  
17 perception, per se, so you've got this negative  
18 perception from a lot of these young people.

19 However, a recent Boston Federal  
20 Reserve report that was just published about 2 weeks  
21 ago, they surveyed 25 to 39 year olds who are not in  
22 school but have college degrees, and they found that  
23 the New England population of this cohort in the last  
24 15 years is steady. However, the US population grew  
25 by about 22 percent so we're flat, and everybody else

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1 is really growing. However, when you drill down into  
2 that, that same study showed that in those 15 years,  
3 we lost about 6 to 7 percent of the native born  
4 population. However, we gained about 14 percent of  
5 those foreign-born. So we think that your development  
6 plan should include the following three things.

7                   One, we need an overt strategy to  
8 reach out to these foreign students at our prep  
9 schools, colleges and universities, and to reach out  
10 to their parents, because they're here also at times.  
11 Secondly, we like to see you build upon the  
12 internhere.com website. This is a free service. It's  
13 a free website that matches interns, college interns  
14 and businesses offering internships. For example,  
15 they have had over 4,900 Connecticut and 2,100  
16 out-of-state students get jobs through here, and they  
17 have served over 700 employers. And, finally, we  
18 would like to see you support some of these new  
19 burgeoning young business leader programs that we see  
20 at the various Chambers of Commerce. For example, The  
21 Hartford Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs has  
22 about a 200-member strong organization, and the  
23 greater Meriden Chamber of Commerce has one called the  
24 Young Business Leaders of Greater Meriden.

25                   We think the state can act as a

1 clearing house and to support those. Those folks  
2 represent our next cohort of leaders, and we think  
3 that these three strategies can really help in growing  
4 and retaining that young professional base.

5 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you. I agree  
6 with you. I would like to point out that I'm very  
7 familiar with attracting foreign students. I've been  
8 at UConn for 10 years, and that issue is a federal  
9 issue, and I would encourage everybody to write to  
10 Washington to our Congressional delegation. We need  
11 to increase the H1B quota. As you know, this past  
12 April there were 150,000 applicants. They slammed the  
13 door. They can only take 65,000 of Bachelors and  
14 below, 20,000 Bachelors and above or above Bachelors  
15 and that door slammed. There was a lottery of which  
16 they chose 65,000 out of 250,000. That means 85,000  
17 foreign students went home. 85,000 businesses who had  
18 started the H1B process were out of luck. This has a  
19 chilling effect. This is not an editorial. This is  
20 fact. This has a chilling effect on hiring in the  
21 future. Why would a company want to gamble if it's  
22 now a lottery?

23 So I sympathize. It is something  
24 that not only effects Connecticut but the nation, and  
25 it's not something a state government can affect

1 immigration policy. It is a national policy, and  
2 until we adjust that policy for the new realities, the  
3 demographic changes that we're going through as a  
4 nation, especially in the Northeast, we're in some  
5 ways hostage to that policy.

6 MR. CRETARO: Right, but we can  
7 support that as a group here.

8 MR. McMILLEN: Yes, we can. Thank  
9 you, sir. Sean Moore.

10 MR. MOORE: Good evening. My name  
11 is Sean Moore. I am from the Greater Meriden Chamber  
12 of Commerce, and I have been there about 5 years with  
13 the City of Meriden. We are one of many localities  
14 who claims to be the geographic center of the State of  
15 Connecticut. I am very proud to be here to say that  
16 we are a city, and the fact that we're the geographic  
17 center is not terribly important for our discussions.

18 We are a relatively small state with  
19 incredible challenges and lots of opportunities. The  
20 Greater Meriden Chamber of Commerce and City of  
21 Meriden work very well together, and I'm here to say  
22 that Meriden is a city that is very well positioned  
23 for growth in our state. As we speak, we have  
24 incredible rail resources that run through downtown  
25 Meriden with Amtrack and freight opportunities, and

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1 the City of Meriden is preparing our city center for

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2 the New Haven to Springfield rail line that is  
3 scheduled for 2010.

4 I am a member of the Transportation  
5 Strategy Board, and followed that project for a long  
6 time. We are very excited about the transit oriented  
7 development opportunities that will happen in downtown  
8 Meriden. This is very walkable, very liveable space,  
9 and we're very pleased DECD has provided the funds so  
10 far to take down the hub site in downtown Meriden.  
11 That project is completed and in fact under budget, so  
12 we're very pleased to be working with the commission  
13 on that.

14 In addition, in downtown Meriden we  
15 have all three of our local bus routes terminate at  
16 that particular site providing incredible access to  
17 our job opportunities around town. We have bus routes  
18 with the City of Middletown as well as New Britain as  
19 well. They are already up and running creating great  
20 access, but we are also in the process now of  
21 discussions with the cities of Cheshire and  
22 Southington about expanding bus opportunities there.

23 Again, our goal is to take  
24 incredible advantage of what we think will be an  
25 opportunity for incredible growth in central

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1 Connecticut within the New Haven to Springfield rail  
2 line. Some folks have mentioned highway access in the  
3 past this evening. I-91, routes 5 and 15, Meriden has  
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4 incredible north-south capabilities. Additionally,  
5 I-691, which is within the half mile of TOD, Transit  
6 Oriented Development, Ring, is within walking distance  
7 of our train station. 691 very efficiently connects  
8 route 9 and I-84 as well, so the access of Meriden is  
9 quite effective and quite remarkable.

10 Our city, additionally, has  
11 incredible telecommunication and utility resources in  
12 the ground, which are ready for business even as we  
13 speak. Our housing costs are fairly stable, and our  
14 housing starts in fact run in downtown. We do have  
15 some workforce opportunities in town as well. I am  
16 also on the Workforce Alliance. We have an incredible  
17 array of services for businesses ranging from  
18 Connecticut Works One Stop to the Meriden Business and  
19 Learning Center. I would be remiss if I did not  
20 mention the Meriden center of Middlesex Community  
21 College which is also in downtown Meriden as well.  
22 These are incredible resources that businesses use on  
23 a regular basis, and they are available in Meriden as  
24 we speak.

25 I look forward to working with DECD

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1 on their strategic plan. We have an incredible  
2 opportunity in downtown Meriden with the 14-acre site  
3 that the city currently owns, and lots of opportunity  
4 in that half mile, so I am very pleased to be here

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5 tonight, and thank you for the time to speak.

6 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you, sir.  
7 Richard Pearson.

8 MR. PEARSON: My name is Rich  
9 Pearson. I am here tonight to speak on behalf of two  
10 organizations briefly, the Connecticut Employment &  
11 Training Commission, and I'm also with Jim Ieronian, a  
12 member of the Campaign for a Working Connecticut. Not  
13 to repeat Jim's comments but just to amplify, the  
14 Coalition for a Working Connecticut is a statewide  
15 organization that has over 40 members who have  
16 identified themselves on the letterhead with an equal  
17 number who operate under the radar and are active  
18 participants. That group has been working together  
19 for over a year now, and has identified the low wage  
20 worker segment of the state's labor force as a  
21 strategic asset, an untapped strategic asset critical  
22 to the state's future economic growth, and the group  
23 has developed a specific set of proposals for  
24 increased state investment to help elevate the skills  
25 and the employability and the future career prospects

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1 of that labor pool through what we consider to be  
2 proven effective best practices strategies that work,  
3 and we would like to provide that information to you  
4 in detail after the fact.

5 It's a significant fact that the  
6 Coalition represents a broad spectrum of Chambers of  
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7 Commerce including the Middlesex claim state agencies,  
8 state organized labor, public agencies, nonprofit  
9 service providers, educational entities. It's a broad  
10 spectrum of interests who have come together to agree  
11 on a strategic framework for the development of that  
12 labor asset.

13                   The other organization I would like  
14 to just call to your attention is the Connecticut  
15 Employment & Training Commission which is a statewide  
16 policy board appointed by the Governor to provide  
17 general policy guidance and oversight of the state's  
18 workforce activities. Larry McHugh from the Middlesex  
19 Chamber is a key member and has been for years.  
20 Commissioner McDonald for DECD is an active key member  
21 of the commission. It's chaired by Wally Barnes,  
22 former CEO of Barnes Group. Its members are a  
23 majority from the business sector. Its other members  
24 represent the other key state agencies, key state  
25 agencies who are involved in states human services,

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1 education, economic development enterprises.

2                   That commission has developed its  
3 own strategic plan which identifies a set of strategic  
4 priorities which we believe you ought to take under  
5 consideration as you develop your plan, specific  
6 proposal strategies that probably fit with the ideas  
7 you will be considering as you go forward. Again,

8 we'll make that information available to you formally  
9 and the commission itself, consistent with the,  
10 campaign has now identified this whole area of  
11 developing the low wage worker labor force as a  
12 critical priority in the near term to help stimulate  
13 and support the state's economic growth.

14 So we'll provide that information to  
15 you, and hope you will take it seriously, and look  
16 forward to your work, and appreciate the opportunity  
17 for talking with you tonight.

18 MR. McMILLEN: We look forward to  
19 receiving that information, sir. Thank you very much.  
20 Richard Hanley, if I am pronouncing that correctly.

21 MR. HANLEY: I'm Richard Hanley and  
22 I'm the present chairman of the town of Durham  
23 Economic Development Commission, and I am here tonight  
24 to speak as a member of that commission but not for  
25 the commission. I just wanted to encourage this

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1 hearing to seriously look at the issues of responsible  
2 growth, and the interaction between land use and local  
3 education. We in Durham have a tax base which is  
4 approximately 95 percent residential, and any change  
5 in the formulas which look at how education is funded  
6 in the State of Connecticut can dramatically affect  
7 our own local education system.

8 Unfortunately or fortunately,  
9 however you look at it, land use typically dictates

10 the education budget in the town, and the education  
11 budget goes back to looking at and can influence the  
12 type of workers we can produce, type of workforce we  
13 can produce that is appropriate to the State. So  
14 there is this evil circle that you end up getting  
15 into. Although you would like to have responsible  
16 growth, you must also have responsible education  
17 funding to that end.

18 Just some anecdotal things. As the  
19 president of the local PTO, I see that our PTO and  
20 other PTOs in town are continually asked by the school  
21 district, in cases where there is not enough money in  
22 the education budget, to fund those initiatives which  
23 we would like to have or have had in the past, and  
24 that I believe continues to grow. Those requests  
25 continue to grow.

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1 Recently in the town we have had a  
2 number of education budgets which have been turned  
3 down, and this has led to the formation of a political  
4 action committee by members of the community which  
5 want to see the education budgets passed. So it's  
6 becoming much more of a political issue in order to  
7 try to get our children educated. So with that, I'll  
8 close my remarks, and just encourage responsible  
9 growth needs responsible education funding.

10 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you, sir. Gary

11 Robi nson.

12 MR. ROBINSON: It's going to be a  
13 short meeting. I'm Gary Robinson, New Britain,  
14 Connecticut. I really didn't know what was going on  
15 here. I sort of came and listened to a lot of people.  
16 I unfortunately -- I am a businessman, have been for  
17 many years in Connecticut. I have the disadvantage of  
18 being born and raised in New York City so I perceive  
19 New Britain as being in the country, and I noticed  
20 that Stanley Works is not around much anymore, and the  
21 big employers in our community are the hospital and  
22 the city government, and I look at the State of  
23 Connecticut, and I look at the number of workers in  
24 the State of Connecticut, and I realize that there's  
25 just a large number of people involved in these

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1 agencies, and I think, when you look at the taxpayers,  
2 they're supporting these people in many ways. The  
3 cities as well. We wind up with a great many new  
4 problems that come to bare.

5 As a small businessman, I have a  
6 company that employs 35 people. We have been around  
7 for 25 years with some help, I might add, from your  
8 agency, but at the end of the day, you know, I look at  
9 tax bills, and I look at all the things, and I think  
10 to myself if I wasn't this committed, I probably  
11 wouldn't stay here. At the end of the day if I don't  
12 pay taxes, I give my employees more money. If I don't

13 have to pay fines to OSHA, I give my employees more  
14 money.

15 So the small businessman's out there  
16 primarily to generating revenue clearly to make a  
17 living for themselves, and also to provide benefits  
18 for their employees. I can't give my employees health  
19 insurance. We used to give them 80 percent of their  
20 health insurance. We now give them 20 percent, and  
21 that just became an economic burden we couldn't  
22 continue. Fortunately, my wife works for the state so  
23 I don't have that problem.

24 One of the things I missed looking  
25 this over is the Board of Education is not part of

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1 this process. I think a lot of the agencies that I  
2 see that come to bare here are not-for-profit  
3 agencies, and their role in life is to fill a hole  
4 somewhere that we have missed doing something with --  
5 as the example of that, we don't teach our kids how to  
6 do arithmetic so we have literacy volunteers to teach  
7 them how to read and do arithmetic. I don't see how  
8 we give them a high school degree when they don't do  
9 the work. They walk out of high school and you ask  
10 them who the first president of the United States was  
11 and they have no idea. I don't know what we do with  
12 these kids in school today, but I just don't perceive  
13 it as education.

14 Kids on the high end of the -- who  
15 go, you know -- the top 5, 10 percent of school kids  
16 do very well in life. They get good college  
17 educations. They go forward, but the vast majority of  
18 the students certainly in the inner cities are really  
19 down, down at the bottom. You mix them all up. We  
20 spend a lot of money, and get a very bad product on  
21 the back end, and to not involve them. The board of  
22 education, the educational process, and the strategic  
23 plan you're looking at I think is a serious flaw. It  
24 needs to be a part of it.  
25 I've heard about public transit. I'm

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1 a big believer in it. Owning an automobile in New  
2 York City was a liability. I never knew what a yellow  
3 bus was until I came to Connecticut. These kids can't  
4 walk to the corner. The bus stops two corners away.  
5 Let's put them on public transit particularly in the  
6 cities. If you get to Durham and East Hampton, yeah,  
7 you are not going to walk to school probably, but  
8 certainly in the inner cities we can get people  
9 interested in public transit if we get them on it.

10 When I had that discussion with  
11 Board of Education, it's fear. Then I ask how many of  
12 the kids have a cell phone. All of them. The bus  
13 driver has a cell phone and a radio. The kids are on  
14 the bus with cell phones, and you worry about where  
15 your kids? Something's missing. Urban

16 redevelopment is not going to happen until we get a  
17 redevelopment building code. I don't know where the  
18 state architect is with this. I heard about this 8,  
19 10 years ago. We were going to have a rehabilitation  
20 building code.

21 If you want to establish buildings  
22 above the first floor, any city in this state, the  
23 costs are prohibitive. We absolutely need to find a  
24 way to get buildings in these downtown cities  
25 occupied, and certainly one of those is to have a

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1 factor that you can't afford to do it.

2 Enterprise zones, get rid of them.  
3 Every city in Connecticut's got an enterprise zone.  
4 What's the advantage for New Britain to have one ad  
5 Southington has one? We are not going to get anybody  
6 here. We just need to look at those things. I'll go  
7 quick.

8 Taxes of businesses kill the jobs.  
9 If you take my money and I need new jobs, I find a way  
10 to do it, but examine the motives of the  
11 not-for-profit organizations and why we need them.  
12 Not that they're wrong, but probably there is an  
13 underlying problem that should be solved without the  
14 organization. Thank you.

15 MR. McMILLAN: Thank you, sir.  
16 Those are all the speakers who have signed up. Is

17 there anybody else who would like to speak? Please  
18 come forward. State your name.

19 MS. DEANS: I'm Gretchen Deans,  
20 director of Administration at the Connecticut Economic  
21 Resource Center. I just want to build on something  
22 that was said about building the competitive  
23 nonprofits. I would encourage the department to work  
24 with DAS to qualify more nonprofits as small business  
25 entities. We are not eligible to become certified at

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1 this point, because a few construction entities can,  
2 but we're as competitive as the others, and I would  
3 like you to look at that. That's all I have to say.

4 MR. McMILLEN: Is there anyone else  
5 who would like to speak? Please come forward. State  
6 your name.

7 MR. ANDREW: My name is Fred  
8 Andrews. I'm the interim director of business and  
9 industry services at Middlesex College. We have  
10 experience and continue to experience changes in  
11 demographics in the state as we're all aware of. It  
12 continues to change and it continues to evolve, and we  
13 think that perhaps the community colleges need to be  
14 supported more in terms of the workforce development  
15 issues that are needed.

16 We are probably anticipating some  
17 downturns in the economy. Therefore, some people are  
18 going to be looking for new opportunities, new ways to

19 develop their skills in the workforce. We think that  
20 we, as a system, certainly here at this college are  
21 prepared to do that. We also would like to be  
22 recognized for the fact that we do provide very  
23 comprehensive training to employers as well as to  
24 employees, and we do it for the future as well as for  
25 the present. Our areas of interest, which I think you

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1 would agree, tend on toward the future, and the growth  
2 of the economy in this state will be for green  
3 technologies. Most likely we're going to be  
4 experiencing, we already are experiencing it, a boom  
5 in green technologies in the photovoltaic production  
6 and so forth. We are looking to the future where we  
7 can obtain more support from the state to provide  
8 those, that kind of training for people who do the  
9 construction and do the installation and so forth, and  
10 for manufacturers to fabricate those things.

11 So we're looking for that kind of  
12 opportunity, and we're looking for more and more  
13 support for micro enterprise training as well. I  
14 think those are key elements for the state's growth  
15 and those initiatives. Certainly computer assisted  
16 manufacturing technology is at the forefront. Many of  
17 these things can be combined and blended, and we are  
18 looking right now at the possibility of taking some,  
19 putting on the road, as CONNSTEP had mentioned before

20 some C and C training and doing some mobile training  
21 for C and C operators. There's a huge shortage in  
22 that field, and you do have testimony in the box.

23 MR. McMILLEN: Thank you very much.  
24 Is there anyone else who would like to speak? We'll  
25 take a short break. The commissioner is on her way.

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1 We expect her momentarily so let's take about a 10  
2 minute break and reconvene.

3 (Whereupon, there was a brief  
4 recess.)

5 MR. McMILLEN: May we reconvene? At  
6 this time I would like to introduce our commissioner  
7 of the Department of Economic and Community  
8 Development, Joan McDonald.

9 MS. McDONALD: I can't sit-down.  
10 I've been in the car, I think, all day. I really want  
11 to thank everybody for coming here tonight. The  
12 development of the strategic plan is extremely  
13 important to all of us as we want to make Connecticut  
14 the place that it is today, and preserve it for future  
15 generations.

16 I started my morning in New London.  
17 I met with the folks from Sector and I left there, and  
18 came to Hartford where we had a great responsible  
19 growth task force meeting. As someone said when we  
20 left the task force meeting, when you get 12 type A  
21 personalities in a room, and you reach consensus on

22 where you want the future of Connecticut to be, it's a  
23 huge accomplishment, and I think that sends a strong  
24 message to all of us as we participate in these  
25 forums.

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1 We have a diversity of opinions, but  
2 we have a common goal which is making sure that the  
3 state remains competitive from an economic standpoint  
4 yet we develop the state responsibly and preserve our  
5 human and natural resources and that's a challenge,  
6 but it's also going to be exciting, and I really  
7 appreciate all of you turning out. As I was saying to  
8 Stan, it's a tribute to all of you on a day where we  
9 had 40 mile an hour winds and temperatures in the 20s,  
10 and it's really the holiday season, that you are all  
11 committed to the future of this state, and working in  
12 collaboration with us as we develop the strategic  
13 plan.

14 So I think at this point in time  
15 what we're going to do is if anybody else would like  
16 to speak, to come on up to the microphone. If you  
17 have any questions of me, I'll be happy to answer  
18 them; and if not, we'll leave the record open for a  
19 few minutes and then we'll close up. Anybody else  
20 want to say a few words? Okay. Well, with that said,  
21 again, I appreciate -- we appreciate, myself and the  
22 staff at DECD, and I really appreciate the DECD staff

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23 coming out tonight, and we look forward to future  
24 forums, and, again, you can write to us at our website  
25 if you have any additional comments, and this will be

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1 an ongoing process. Thank you so much.  
2 (Whereupon, this hearing was  
3 concluded at 6:48.)  
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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Jacqueline V. McCauley, a Notary Public  
duly commissioned and qualified in and for the State  
of Connecticut, do hereby certify that this hearing  
was taken by me on the 4th day of December at 5:00  
p.m.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand  
and affixed my seal this 16th day of December, 2007.

Jacqueline V. McCauley  
Notary Public

My Commission expires: 5/31/10

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