



CONNECTICUT STATE
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Testimony by James Blake, Executive Vice President
for Finance and Administration
Southern Connecticut State University
Before the Higher Education and Employment
Advancement Committee
March 11, 2014

Senators Cassano and Boucher, Representatives Willis and LeGeyt, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments for your consideration on **SB 401, *An Act Concerning Workforce Diversity Standards of Contractors Performing Work at Southern Connecticut State University.***

For the record, my name James Blake, and I am the Executive Vice-President for Finance and Administration for Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU). My comments today are not only on behalf of Southern, but on behalf of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, governing Southern as well as 16 other public institutions throughout the state.

I would like to align both SCSU and the Board of Regents with comments submitted by the Department of Administrative Services regarding SB 401 and elaborate on the prospect of increased project costs.

The State of Connecticut has a rigorous policy concerning the awarding of projects to small businesses and minority-owned businesses, and further protects the integrity of the state's workforce by requiring large contractors to have an affirmative action plan on file with CHRO. We believe these requirements lend themselves to fairness and diversity in contracting. By adding to requirements, costs are increased in two ways:

1. Rigid requirements increase the potential administrative costs and timelines for a contractor that must comply, with the resulting costs being passed on to Southern and raising questions as to what happens if a contractor temporarily falls short of the requirements.
2. Southern would be placed at a competitive disadvantage in an environment where contractors may be able to participate in the bidding process for other state projects. This potential reduction in bid volume may result in Southern not receiving the most competitive offer possible.

With respect to the worthy goals in this legislation, we are concerned with the practical impacts on project costs and timelines, and request the committee not consider this proposal at this time.

If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact Kyle Thomas, BOR Legislative Program Manager, at 860-723-0017.