

### **Anthony Tarantino Testimony (Wilcox Tech)**

Good afternoon everybody, my name is Anthony Tarantino and I'm a senior at Wilcox Technical High School. As an out of town student from Wallingford with two younger siblings interested in attending the school the Governors proposed bill has me quite worried. First and foremost, how does this bill affect students not living in Meriden? Today it was brought to my attention that out of town students will be forced to pay \$2,500 tuition. You cannot put a price on the education I have received over the past four years. With our country still facing one of its toughest economic states in years it is more important than ever to make sure that we have a strong workforce. You also cannot put a price on the 2000 plus hours of training earned at our schools towards apprenticeships in a particular trade. Programs such as CWE or Cooperative Working Experience are also great ways to receive the hands on knowledge of a trade. This program allows students to hold down a job in their trade and work for a company while there classmates are in shop and they are out getting paid. All of this on the job training prepares Technical High School students for union jobs in their trades. With the average age of a Union Worker at 55 years old it is vital for us younger tradesman to be as prepared as possible to join the workforce.

Apart from just the technical aspect of our school system, the majority of the states technical high schools are the most academically able schools in their respective towns and cities. Speaking on behalf of my school I know that we are the only school in Meriden, and not just the High Schools, to achieve annual academic progress. This means every year our testing scores improve. By switching from our current acceptance system which brings in all of these terrific students to a lottery system we are taking a giant step backwards academically in every sense of the term. To use a cliché, if it's not broke, why fix it? The CT Tech system is anything but broken so all I am asking is why are all of these drastic changes necessary?

I thank you for your time here today as well as allowing me and my fellow classmates to stand up here in front of you and speak on a topic of which we all deeply believe in.