

<b>Act Number:</b>	09-014 (Special Act)	
<b>Bill Number:</b>	880	
<b>Senate Pages:</b>	1694-1699, 6095-6096, 6100-6102	<b>11</b>
<b>House Pages:</b>	9846-9860	<b>15</b>
<b>Committee:</b>	Commerce: 474-481, 488-505, 520-528	<b>35</b>
	<b>Page Total:</b>	<b>61</b>

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**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

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THE CLERK: --

Calendar Number 181, File Number 190, Senate  
Bill Number 880, AN ACT CONCERNING TRADE WITH  
AFRICA, favorable report of the Committee on  
Commerce and Export.

THE CHAIR:

Senator LeBeau.

SENATOR LeBEAU:

Well, good afternoon, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, sir.

SENATOR LeBEAU:

I move acceptance of the joint committee's  
favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Acting on acceptance and approval of the bill,  
will you remark further, sir?

SENATOR LeBEAU:

Yes, Mr. President. This is a relatively  
simple bill which we requires a report from the  
Department of Economic and Community Development  
to look at our trade with Africa, which is one of  
the, obviously, a future trading partner. We're  
trying to develop trade around the world, and a

disturbing report in this morning's paper about the -- our exports going down. And we know that this an area aware of the world that'll have a great fiscal impact and a great economic impact on the future of our country. And this could be mutually beneficial for both those African countries that we have relationships with, and also, to our local industries. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further on Senate Bill 880? Senator DeBicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, through you, a question to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator LeBeau.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Through you, Mr. President, will there be any fiscal impact to DECD because of the passage of this bill?

THE CHAIR:

Senator LeBeau.

SENATOR LeBEAU:

The fiscal impact stated in the file copy states the small potential minimum impact.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Debicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President. And in just thinking about, you know, the actual impact of doing a study like this, if we, you know, the fiscal note actually says, it would require third party personal or staff overtime to conduct such a study. And my question is, you know, as we are thinking about the economic development and immediate impact that we can have on the economy, is doing another study the right thing for D.E.C.D. to be doing relative to more immediate opportunities that may be out there? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator LeBeau.

SENATOR LeBEAU:

Is that a question?

THE CHAIR:

Gentlemen, through the Chair, please.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Well, I think Senator LeBeau asked. Senator LaBeau, through the Chair, please. Is that through the Chair?

SENATOR LeBEAU:

Through you, Mr. President, is that a question?

THE CHAIR:

Yeah, thank you, sir.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Through you, Mr. President, it is.

THE CHAIR:

Senator LeBeau.

SENATOR LeBEAU:

I think this is a important area of endeavor. I think it's something that we should be looking into. We -- it certainly has tremendous potential for the State of Connecticut and I think it's -- like the committee passed this bill and sent it on to us with a 18 to 2 vote, weighing those -- the appropriateness of this study. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator DeBicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President. And through you, Mr. President, I'd like to thank Senator LeBeau for the answers to those questions.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator DeBicella.

Will you remark? Will you remark further on Senate Bill 880? Will you remark further? If not, Mr. Clerk, please call for roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? Let's go boys. We got a lot of work to do here today.

Have all Senators voted? If all Senators have voted the machine will be locked. Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on passage of Senate Bill 880.

Total Number Voting 32

Those voting Yea 25

Those voting Nay 7

Those absent and not voting 4

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes.

Mr. Clerk.

Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER:

Thank you, Mr. President. For a point of personal privilege, please.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR MEYER:

Members of the circle. My office has been honored this year to have had the service of two very industrious interns -- produced a great deal of effectiveness for our office in doing constituent matters. And I wanted to introduce them to the circle.

And if they would stand. They were -- there they are. Chelsey Hood is an intern from

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Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, now moving to items on the agenda, first of all, on Senate agenda number one, Mr. President, would move to take up House Bill 5211 for purposes of moving it to the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

There is a motion to place House Bill number 5211 from Senate Agenda number one onto the Consent Calendar. I believe, Senator Looney, you need to suspend the rules on that one first.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, move for a suspension for that purpose, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

There is a motion on the floor to suspend the rules to move House bill number 5211 onto the Consent Calendar. Seeing no objection, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Mr. President, thank you. Also, Mr. President, on Senate Agenda number one, move to take up Senate bill 880 for purposes of moving it to the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

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There's a motion on the floor to take up Senate Bill 880, to move it to the Consent Calendar. Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, on Senate Agenda number 2, previously adopted, move to take up House bill 6481, for purposes of placing it on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

There's a motion to move House Bill 6481 off of Senate Agenda number two to the Consent Calendar. Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. And also, Mr. President, on Senate Agenda number two, would move to take up Senate bill 1128 and to place the item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

There's a motion on the floor to item Senate Bill 1128 off of Senate Agenda number two onto the Consent Calendar. Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Mr. President. Mr. President, thank you. We

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Back on Calendar page 18, Calendar 719, House Bill 6676 is marked go and Calendar page 33, Calendar 354, Senate bill 499 is marked go.

Yes, Mr. President, thank you. At this point if the Clerk might call the items on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, please call the Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

Immediate Roll Call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate Roll Call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

Mr. President, the items placed on the first Consent Calendar begin on Senate Agenda number one, Substitute for House bill 5211, Substitute for House bill 6672 and Senate bill 880.

From Senate Agenda number two, Substitute for House bill 6481 and Senate bill 1128.

Going to Senate Calendar, calendar page 229, Substitute for Senate bill 549. Calendar 229, substitute for Senate bill 547. Calendar page 7,

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Calendar 602, substitute for House bill 6584.

Calendar page 10, Calendar 639, House bill 6684.

Calendar page 12, Calendar 667, substitute for House

bill 6539. Calendar page 13, Calendar 678, substitute

for House bill 6306. Calendar 679, substitute for

House bill 6279 and Calendar 682, substitute for House

bill 6041. Calendar page 14, Calendar 692, House bill

6248. Calendar page 15, Calendar 700, substitute for

House bill 6693. Calendar 701, substitute for House

bill 6642. Calendar page 17, Calendar 714, substitute

for House bill 6280. Calendar page 21, Calendar 735,

House bill 6523. Calendar page 26, Calendar 337,

Senate bill 1047.

THE CHAIR:

Sir, I believe that was 377.

THE CLERK:

Yes, Mr. President, Calendar 377, Senate bill 1047. And Calendar page 33, Calendar 378, substitute for Senate bill 1048. Mr. President, that completes the items placed on the first Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Please call for Roll Call vote.

Please call for a Roll Call vote on Consent number

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one, the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by Roll Call on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber? The Senate is now voting by Roll Call. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? If all Senators have voted, please check your vote, the machine will be locked, the Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on adoption of Consent Calendar Number One.

Total number voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar Number One passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President, would move for immediate transmittal to the House of Representatives

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On Page 16, Calendar Number 595, Senate Bill  
Number 880 AN ACT CONCERNING TRADE WITH AFRICA.

Favorable Report of the Committee on Commerce.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you very much. Representative Berger.

REP. BERGER (73rd):

Yes, good morning, Mr. Speaker. I move for acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill in concurrence with the Senate. Will you remark, sir?

REP. BERGER (73rd):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. In doing this Bill this morning, a couple of notes that we need to make. This Bill is really meant as an opening salvo to ultimately lead to development of a Connecticut Africa Exchange Commission, which would work on concern with the Department of Economic and Community Development to put Connecticut at the forefront of trade activity with Africa.

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DECD, the Department of Economic and Community Development has taken a global approach to international trade promotion. This is done first and foremost by educating Connecticut's manufacturing and service firms under logistics and intricacies of the export process.

Throughout the year, DECD provides counseling, seminars and workshops to train Connecticut companies how to become export ready and sell products and services to many countries including Africa and the African continent.

I move for adoption of this Bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Will you remark further on the Bill? Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Clerk has LCO Number 9269, and will he call it and may I be allowed to summarize.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Will the Clerk please call LCO Number 9269, which will be designated House "A".

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 9269, House "A", offered by  
Representatives Sawyer, Berger and Alberts.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize the Amendment. Is there objection to summarization? Hearing none, Representative, you may proceed.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Simply what this does is allow a more defined study by DECD of a four-country study for each of the three following years, for 2010, 2011 and 2012, and I move adoption.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on adoption of House Amendment Schedule "A". Will you remark?

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Mr. Speaker, yes. DECD has a situation that we have not experienced before and that is, they are down to attrition by 10 people at the Department, and they're going to lose another 20 through retirement. So they'll be down 30 members.

So the continent of Africa is very broad and has many opportunities, of which I am in absolute full support in moving forward with this initiative. And

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what this does is narrow the scope to four countries per year to be able to make the workload more manageable.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Will you remark on the Amendment? Representative Berger.

REP. BERGER (73rd):

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I stand in support of the Amendment in its narrowing of the scope, but I did have a few questions for legislative intent for the proponent.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. BERGER (73rd):

Yes. Through you, Mr. Speaker, the good Representative spoke as to the narrowing of the focus of four different countries, and through you, Mr. Speaker, was there a thought pattern as where that would start, and if it would include additional countries moving forward in the continent of Africa. Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sawyer.

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REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In looking at the continent of Africa, I would certainly leave the expertise within the Department that they would go through and look at the economic indicators for the countries to find the first four that would have the most symbiotic relationship currently that we could be able to get the initial work off the ground for the companies that could match up with the State of Connecticut. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Berger.

REP. BERGER (73rd):

Yes, through you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Representative for bringing this Amendment forward in a bipartisan fashion. It improves the Bill and adds to our competitive nature with the State of Connecticut, both in our business export and the expansion of business throughout the world for the State of Connecticut.

So thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, sir. Do you care to remark further on the Amendment? Representative Alberts.

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REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise in support of the Amendment. This Amendment will become the Bill. I do appreciate the work of the good Chairman of the Commerce Committee to recognize the potential that exists for us to expand the boundaries of international commerce.

And I also appreciate the work of Representative Sawyer in crafting this Amendment to recognize the reality that in today's world we simply don't have the funds that we might once have had, or the flexibility that we might once have had to complete a study in a more timely fashion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Hetherington.

REP. HETHERINGTON (125th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a question to the proponent if I may.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. HETHERINGTON (125th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, what is the status currently of trade with Africa by Connecticut companies?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sawyer. You probably could have written him a note and passed it along.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

I'd love the wide angle camera lens at the moment. Is that possible?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When looking at the relationship between Connecticut and the different countries in Africa, there is a broad spectrum of relationships with them, depending on the country's stability at the moment, and as we know, there are some countries in Africa that are moving forward at a very rapid rate with their capitalism and that is something that we want to be involved in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you. Representative Hetherington.

REP. HETHERINGTON (125th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the proponent of the Amendment, and I would urge adoption. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, if I may, just a quick question to the proponent of the Amendment.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

I think that's mister, but go ahead.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Mister, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may, just in Lines 8 through 10, is the intent that we are limiting the study to four different countries per year in the three years so there's a total of 12 countries, or is it over the span of three years that four different countries would be studied?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Mr. Speaker, for the three years it would be a total of 12, in the hope and the expectation that if

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there's the ability to do more than that, that they will.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Will you remark further on the Amendment? Will you remark further on the Amendment before us?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor of the Amendment please indicate by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Those opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it. The Amendment is adopted.

Will you remark further on the Bill as amended?

Representative Noujaim, good morning, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Mr. Speaker, through you, just a question to the proponent of the Bill, Representative Berger.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, Sir.

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REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, through you to Representative Berger, who is not paying attention, I think, through you, Mr. Speaker.

Representative Berger, CNBC reported this morning that in the month of May, we in the United States of America lost 159,000 manufacturing jobs, and this will be the 39th consecutive month where we lose manufacturing business in the country.

Would this study have any negative impact on more jobs leaving the country and going elsewhere?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Berger.

REP. BERGER (73rd):

Yes, through you, Mr. Speaker, absolutely not. This is actually an initiative of many initiatives through DECD that looks to expand the manufacturing footprint in the United States and globally.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you, Mr. Speaker, to Representative Berger, this is very encouraging news.

Would we here in the United States, and specifically in the northeast, be able to compete, because of this Bill, with our counterparts in Africa or even overseas in China, Japan, or any other country?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Berger.

REP. BERGER (73rd):

Yes. Through you, Mr. Speaker, the ultimate goal here is to improve our competitiveness with those countries and share our technology and expertise in the area of manufacturing, thereby expanding our footprint in those countries as well as our own.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the answers, and I look forward to supporting this Bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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Thank you, Representative. Representative  
Giannaros.

REP. GIANNAROS (21st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in favor of the  
Bill, and I just wanted to remind everybody that  
Africa is composed of hundreds of billions of people  
and it's what I would call the forgotten continent  
from an economic point of view.

It has tremendous economic potential that not  
only we can impact the people of Africa through  
increased trade and investments, but also we can gain  
from our perspective, as a result of our investment  
involved in trade, export through Africa.

It is the next, in my opinion, after the Asian  
developing is complete, it's going to be the next  
major boom that we're going to see in the world, and I  
am looking forward to participating in that myself as  
a resident of Connecticut.

So we should take advantage of that, and we want  
to thank the Chairman for bringing it out. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative  
Morris.

REP. MORRIS (140th):

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just rise in support of this Bill. I think it's a phenomenal opportunity.

In 1994 I had the opportunity to go to West Africa with 106 other Connecticut residents. At the time, I was in business. I was able to follow up with officials within the government of Cote (inaudible) and quite frankly, they were interested in the idea that we had the ability to manufacture a lot of the supplies and things that they need to electrify their nation.

So this certainly opens up opportunities and interestingly enough if you recall, at that time in our country we were in a recession. We were having an economic downturn.

So this certainly has the opportunity to bring additional dollars and increase jobs here in the State of Connecticut and in the United States of America, a phenomenal opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill now is something that we'll be able to move forward with,

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which would be able, in my hope, to bring commerce forward as well to the continent of Africa and do it within the resources that we have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Thompson.

REP. THOMPSON (13th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been contacted by representatives of our religious community in Manchester, who wholeheartedly endorse this Bill, and I will endorse it myself with my vote, and I urge our fellow Members to do the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Do you care to remark further on the Bill as amended? Do you care to remark further? If not, staff and guests please come to the Well of the House. Members take their seats. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber.

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The House is voting by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber, please.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

I'd like to remind Members this is the last day. We're not going to be keeping the machine open very long on Bills, so I'd ask everybody to please stay close to the Chamber. If you're not close, run fast.

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted? Please check the Roll Call board to make sure your vote has been properly cast.

If all the Members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

On Senate Bill Number 880 as amended by House "A".

Total Number Voting	133
Necessary for Passage	67
Those voting Yea	133
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	18

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The Bill as amended passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 523.

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

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ROBERT SANTY: And I know you're on a tight time line so we'll try and do that.

SENATOR LEBEAU: And I think this is the year. I mean, with \$50 million sitting out there, come on let's go.

ROBERT SANTY: Right, right.

SENATOR LEBEAU: And before it was \$5 million, you know. That -- now it's 50 million. That's a different -- that's a horse of a different color as Dorothy would say.

Any further comments? Questions?  
Concerns?

Thank you, Bob.

ROBERT SANTY: Thank you.

SENATOR LEBEAU: I'm afraid I might mispronounce this, but I'm going give it a try, Ali Arisco.

I'm going -- this is not going work is it? Oh, okay. I'm sorry. Frank, I didn't realize that you were on. I didn't have a separate sheet.

Ali, you'll be next -- if that's the correct pronunciation.

Frank, Frank Sykes from the African-American Affairs Commission.

FRANK SYKES: First of all, I'd like to thank you, Senator LeBeau and this committee for bringing this issue, you know, forward. I mean, I know, I -- we've been, you know, pestering you to try get it on the agenda, and so we really appreciate you for at least hearing it. I mean the mere fact

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that we're actually hearing this issue, I think is -- is very important.

My name is Frank Sykes. I'm with the legislative analyst with the African-American Commission. The commission represents a voice on various issues impacting the African American community. Today, I'm speaking in support of SB 880. We see this bill as an initial step towards building and strengthening trade and investment opportunities between Connecticut and Africa. It is our belief that in the light of the current economic climate, our state should take on new, bold initiatives capable of generating jobs in the long term. As such, a study of DECD programs concerning Africa is timely.

We are all aware of the unemployment situation in the state, and the state impact it is having on communities. In 2007, the jobless rate was 4.6 percent and 5.7 percent in -- in -- sorry. In 2007, the jobless rate was 4.6 percent and 5.7 percent in 2008. And, as of December of 2008, the rate is 7.1 percent. Many businesses, small to mid size alike, have suffered huge job losses, some irreversible. Yet small business plays a crucial role in the creation and expansion of new jobs.

In our state today, there are businesses eager to enter new markets, such as Africa, yet the lack of knowledge and expertise and a real understanding of the region presents a challenge for many.

I mean, Africa is a complex region. For example, there's no such thing as a common African culture. It comprises of 53

countries of over 1000 indigenous languages. And, even within national boundaries, there can be vast ethno-cultural differences among populations. The same applies to its economy, class structure, climate, so on and so forth. Western media has not helped in presenting an objective view of the continent, as such, misconceptions and some misinformation persist.

News from this part of the world is often negative, however, layered under all the gloom and doom, is also a continent with boundless opportunities, opportunities in agro-business, infrastructural projects, healthcare, et cetera, just to name a few.

The IMF names eight countries as countries with emerging market-based economies. These are countries that have undertaken significant political and socio-economic reform over the last decade and are ripe for investment. It is projected that many more African nations will follow this path, creating even greater investment opportunities for Connecticut businesses; therefore, a study such as this one being proposed is needed and should provide a better understanding of the continent's opportunities, strengths, weaknesses, and challenges. A study of this nature has the potential of laying the groundwork and potentially open -- opening doors for increase business activity between the state of Connecticut and Africa.

And I'll just, you know, mention that there are, you know, a number of countries and states and municipalities that recognize the -- the vast investment and trade opportunities in the region, and they've

taken, you know, full advantage of it. One that comes to mind is Prince George's County in Maryland. They have established an African trade office. And, you know, some of the, you know, services which are mutually beneficial to the state and the continent of Africa. It basically connects small and medium size Connecticut, I mean, businesses with its African counterparts. It establishes relationships with African embassies and signs memorandum of understandings with various chamber of commerces -- commerce.

So, you know, there's just a whole range of things which such an -- this study can bring or begin to a due for -- creating jobs in especially the small business sector. So on that note, I'd like to, you know, thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify, and I hope you support this bill.

Do you have any questions?

SENATOR LEBEAU: Thank you, Frank. Frank, could you tell me -- I'm looking over the -- the testimony from DECD. And, in reading the testimony from DECD, they're in opposition to the bill, and I think the -- to -- to kind of summarize the opposition. One idea is that they have a global approach as opposed to any kind of regional approach, and, the region in this case being Africa. And, secondly, the -- there -- we already have a kind of a method of international trade that is taking place, or a way that they're involved in trying to stimulate an international trade through the use of the Department of Commerce and using them as an ally -- to -- to U.S. -- U.S. DOC, the U.S. Department of Commerce. Would you comment

on that and would you comment -- and in answering that question, why -- why should we particularly focus on Africa, say, above Southeast Asia or Central Asia or South America?

FRANK SYKES: I mean that's a good question. I mean we're not really, you know, proposing that you sort of like pick and choose which, you know, regions that you should, you know, sort of focus on. Part of what some of the issues that proponents had with the bill, was the fact that I mean, with the DECD, was the fact that they felt that maybe they had not, sort of, paid more attention to -- to, you know, that region. And, apparently, I mean, based on my understanding, there was a bill that had come forth, I believe sometime in 1997, which had basically, you know, charged the DECD to report to the General Assembly on its efforts to try to reach out to the continent. And that report or that report was not complete.

So I mean, essentially, what we're trying to do here is that we were trying to really work with the DECD to give it the support -- I mean, under its support and guidance so that it can reach out more to that -- to the continent because certainly there are businesses in the state that once viewed us, but they feel that they're not, there's not enough -- there's not a vehicle which is strong enough to reach out to continents. So that's -- that's my answer to it.

SENATOR LEBEAU: If I remember correctly, wasn't -- wasn't there supposed to be a committee that was established by previous legislation? That was supposed to meet on

a regular basis?

FRANK SYKES: Right. And I'm not -- I'm not clear. I'm not sure at this point in time whether they're -- that committee is in existence or not. I'm not quite sure at this time.

SENATOR LEBEAU: And I -- and I think one of the things that we were trying to do through the use of this bill was to, in a sense say what's happening with that committee, and we would have written a bill to establish such a committee if there already is supposed to be one in existence. But, apparently, it's not meeting. And, we -- and from the African-American Affairs Commission, I think aren't you supposed to have membership in that committee?

FRANK SYKES: In that committee?

SENATOR LEBEAU: Trade African Committee?

FRANK SYKES: I'm not quite sure of that. I'm not even -- I can't even -- I don't even know whether they actually met. You know there are other speakers here who actually were around at the time when these -- or at the beginning of the genesis of this whole issue of trying to, you know, reach out to Africa so they will probably have more information on -- on, you know, of what the requirements were.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Okay. Thank you, Frank, thank you for being here today.

Further questions? Representative Albert.

REP. ALBERTS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Frank, for your

testimony.

I -- I just had a quick question, and I don't know if you know the answer to this, but the proposed bill states that the study is going to be of Connecticut businesses with international trade with African countries with whom the United States has diplomatic relations. Are there many countries in -- on the continent that we don't have diplomatic relations with? Do you know?

FRANK SYKES: I believe there are some, but I'm not quite sure of all the ones that they are not. I'm sure there's a list somewhere. If I have that information, I think, I should be able to find it for you.

A VOICE: Somalia.

REP. ALBERTS: Well, I think, yeah, maybe Somalia might be one, but I'm not quite sure how big that list would be. If you do come across that I would appreciate it.

FRANK SYKES: I will

REP. ALBERTS: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Thank you, Representative Alberts.

I would assume Somalia, Ethiopia, some of the heart of Africa countries that are basically not even countries these days. Tribal warfare keeps them broken up so...

FRANK SYKES: I just want to add one thing.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Go -- go ahead, Frank

FRANK SYKES: I mean, we're really trying to work with the DECD. We're not, you know -- I mean all of the proponents of this, you know, bill are trying to, sort of, get the DECD's involvement and guidance and support. It's not like we're trying to have some, sort of, you know, where we're sort of, like, ordering them to do something, and -- and, you know, we're forcing them to -- we're trying to get their involvement, and, you know like, the office in Prince George's County, Maryland that was an initiative which, apparently, are getting money from the federal government, and they have made some inroads in, you know, establishing these business connections, and -- and -- and which are mutually beneficial to Maryland and, you know, the businesses of Maryland and Connecticut is creating jobs. Okay. So it's really a win-win situation for everyone. So that's what we're trying to do here. We're trying to, you know, get everyone on the same page. And, I mean, that's essentially what this is about. It's not really adversarial.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Thank you, Frank.

Any further questions?

FRANK SYKES: I thank you, again, for bringing that issue up. Just the mere fact that we're having the conversation I think is great. Thank you.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Aili Arisco. Are you going to tell me if I'm even close?

AILI ARISCO: Close. Aili.

you, and I hope you can connect with Bob, and I'm sure you are on a regular basis as we move forward on this to try work -- to work out the bumps in this bill.

JOHN SHEMO: Okay.

SENATOR LEBEAU: You also testified, John, on -- I don't know. Let me see if your name is on it, but it's a -- MetroHartford Alliance also testified on Senate Bill 884, would you like to make any comments on that?

JOHN SHEMO: I'm sorry which was 884?

SENATOR LEBEAU: 884 was the -- an act concerning employment tax credits.

JOHN SHEMO: I probably have nothing further to add to that testimony but certainly we're supportive of that, and we would hope that you would give that bill equal consideration.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Great. Thank you.

Any further comments or questions by members of the committee? If not, John, always good to see you. Thank you for coming in today.

JOHN SHEMO: Good to see you. Thanks.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Next person to testify Sam Andoh.

SAM ANDOH: Good morning, Chairman LeBeau and Mr. Berger. My name is Sam Andoh. I'm a resident of Hamden in Connecticut, and I'm a language professor at Southern Connecticut State University. I think the idea of enhancing trade with Africa is a

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very laudable one, and I would speak in support of the Bill 880 in which you are now considering.

In a very real sense, Africa is the last frontier in economic development. It is the least developed of the continents and, one, where trade can produce tremendous mutual benefits for Connecticut and also for Africa.

In the past, attempts at helping the continent to develop have involved bilateral and multilateral grants which often serve to benefit a few people and buttress the power of the ruling classes.

Increasingly, the world has come to realize that trade with Africa, which is based on mutual benefits, represents the best hope for the continent to develop.

Trading with Africa has been difficult because in the past investment was fraught with risks. Some of the countries were and still are unstable. And, where they were stable, the stability was usually due to a strong man imposing his will on the rest of the people, usually supported by the military. And this made longtime relationships difficult and, therefore, confined trade to the extractive industries, mainly mining. And we only imported those goods which we absolutely could not produce.

In the last decade, with the help of several international organizations, some of the countries have been set on paths to good governance, and with the help of the United Nations development programs and, actually, with the -- and help of the U.S.,

some of the Saharan African countries now have sovereign bond ratings which should serve as guides to businesses. It is estimated that U.S. companies, currently in Africa, get about 28 percent in return which is considerably more than they get elsewhere.

Now, as countries in Africa benefit from good governance and create conditions for rapid economic growth, we in Connecticut should be ready not to only engage but also to help speed the process so that we can create the growth which will enable them to buy more from us.

It is important to notice also that several of the African nations are closer to Connecticut than the Southeast Asian countries with whom we now trade heavily. Transportation costs, therefore, should be considerably lower. Many of the countries closer to Connecticut are also English speaking: Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, and to some extent the Cameroons. This should also make it easier for communication and, hence, minimize costs.

The 15 countries in West Africa which comprise of ECOWAS, for example, have a population of about 250 million. Admittedly, now, they are all most of them are very poor but that represents a good potential. Connecticut has a heavy machinery industrial sector, which should be appealing to the developing countries.

Right now, UT exports to -- air conditioners and elevators to South Africa. When you think of the fact that all of Africa or most of Africa is tropical, the opportunity to export air conditioners to

the continent represents a very big opportunity for the industries in Connecticut.

And it's not just the big ones, which are going to benefit. There's a chance encounter, for example, between a Connecticut lady and Ghanaian cocoa producer led to the Ghanaian farmer buying a machine from this lady to go and process the cocoa butter and cocoa powder, which she then exported to Connecticut. And so there's a tremendous opportunity for not just for the big industries but also for the smaller ones as well.

We have an important financial sector in Connecticut and, as these countries now begin to develop their financial sector, one could expect that they would seek expertise. And we would want to make sure that we are there on the ground floor.

And we ought not to wait until they have gotten to the point where they can do things for themselves because they're going to them with the help of other states and with the help of other countries. I think we should be in on the ground floor so that when the time comes they look to us as a natural trading partner in some of these areas. Thank you very much.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Thank you, Professor Andoh. I totally agree with your sentiments expressed in your last sentence that we should be establishing a relationship. And, going back to your first sentence, this is kind of the last frontier in economic development. And, as Africa emerges with a strong economy, I think some

of those countries that we talked about or were alluded to by Mr. Sykes, that presents an opportunity for trade which could be mutually beneficial for both sides.

Any questions by members of the committee?  
Comments?

Thank you very much for coming in today.

SAM ANDOH: Thank you.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Mr. Sandstrom?

HARALD SANDSTROM: I have a written testimony that has not been distributed yet. If I may --

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SENATOR LEBEAU: Why don't you give it to a our clerk, and he'll distribute it for us. I hope you have enough copies for all of us. Okay. Thank you.

HARALD SANDSTROM: While that is being done, let me make a couple let me make a couple of preliminary comments. My name is Harold Sandstrom.

SENATOR LEBEAU: The clock -- the clock is ticking, Mr. Sandstrom.

HARALD SANDSTROM: I beg your pardon?

SENATOR LEBEAU: The clock is ticking.

HARALD SANDSTROM: I know.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Go ahead.

HARALD SANDSTROM: I just wanted to emphasize that, though this testimony is written on University of Hartford stationery, where I

teach in the Politics and Government Department, I do not speak for the University anymore than my distinguished colleague, Demetrios Giannaros from Farmington, Representative among you does. As much as I would like to, I'm going to skip the paragraph about credentials, except to add one thing that I forgot to include and this is apropos to your comment, Mr. Chairman, about the "horse of a different color" a few minutes ago. I had the privilege, looking like me, to direct African-American studies at the University of Hartford for sixteen years and, being Swedish born, as you may hear from my accent that meant that I became a "Norse of a different color."

Now, I --

SENATOR LEBEAU: I liked it because I like corn.

HARALD SANDSTROM: That was not even original with me, but I like it.

I'd like to skip, well, actually, let me just mention very -- at the very beginning, the first paragraph, that I had the privilege of testifying here twelve years ago when there was a strong bipartisan consensus to do essentially what is now being proposed again and, regrettably, that was thwarted by a mishandling and weak follow-up by the Commission on Economic Opportunity and Development. And we hope that times have changed. Certainly, they have changed for the worst economically, but the times have changed also in the disposition of the commission so that we can move forward on this important bill about trade with Africa.

To move to the third paragraph, it is abundantly clear that a progressive state, like Connecticut, with long-established manufacturing and export/import credentials -- as just emphasized by my distinguished colleague from Southern Connecticut. I think his testimony was excellent -- we are, actually, in a very strong position to develop economic ties of mutual benefit -- I'll try not to be too redundant -- with the stable and growing economies of Sub-Sahara Africa.

If I may insert just a short aside, if we look at the People's Republic of China, a few years ago, groveling in enormous poverty, and there are still millions, millions of people who are, but they have progressed enormously. Once the (inaudible) of take-off stage, they become tremendous consumers of American products, and, of course, exporters too, of entirely too much stuff in terms of our trade balance with them, but I see similar patterns being possible.

We discussed with some of the wealthier states, like Nigeria, if they can finally get their act together. I had the privilege of being there a few years ago. They need some greater transparency and stability in that country, but they certainly have the wealth to really take off if they get their mind sorted out.

So, I think it is a great pity that our state lags behind in effort that I think is going to be a low- to no-cost effort to begin to study what we have done to put it on the table of what is, in fact, possible to do. And I would like to emphasize, particularly, the possibilities that this

may bring to help some of the least fortunate of our citizens who are without work and who live in dilapidated areas of our great cities.

So, I think that in the vision of the African Trade and Information Center -- and its director is going to speak shortly, Mohamoud Ahmed -- that we have these empty buildings that are sitting around doing nothing at the moment and with a little bit of vision, we might be able to generate certain things, as coffee processing centers with coffee coming from abundant supplies in, especially, Eastern Africa.

So I urge the Commerce Committee to report favorably on this raised Bill Number 880 and to promote it vigorously among your colleagues so that it can be made clear, as it was twelve years ago, that the state government really does mean what it says when it wants to move forward in this direction. And it's a matter of saying, in effect, that we really meant it in 1997. It's high time and terribly timely. And, even though I'm in the process of retiring from my university teaching and research position, I'm willing to help in any way that I can. Thank you.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Thank you, Dr. Sandstrom. Doctor, could you tell me a little bit about the Africa Trade and Information Center? What was that -- what was that supposed to be -- and it's something that I can ask our Office of Legislative Research to look into too. Can I have a minute overview of that?

HARALD SANDSTROM: Yes. I would defer, primarily, to Mohamoud, who's going to

Speak, as its director.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Okay.

HARALD SANDSTROM: But it's a long-established group, very small scale, where he has worked diligently with Alan Gates, a distinguished colleague of his, to try to bring awareness to the opportunities that exist for trade.

I'm sorry. I forgot to bring my water up, and I'm absolutely dehydrated. I can't even speak. Let me pause for one second. I'm on some meds. that dry me out.

So I feel that with the kind of expertise that that group commands that they would be able to be a tremendous assistance in alerting the commission and the state officials to the opportunities that exist. It's a matter of not reinventing the wheel. It's a matter of tapping the expertise that we have readily at hand.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Great. I think that's helpful, and we'll talk to Mohamoud a little bit more about that.

HARALD SANDSTROM: Good.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Any further questions by members of the committee?

Thank you very much for appearing today and thank you for your testimony.

HARALD SANDSTROM: Thank you very much for your time.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Mohamoud, you are up next.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Yeah, thank you very much for having me.

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My name is Mohamoud Ahmed. I'm the president of the African Trade Information Center in Hartford Connecticut.

In 1997, actually, the state's senators and the state's representatives, they fully agree to establish economic diplomatic relations with the stable African countries. Governor Roland signed the act, and it became an act of law, but the major problem, because a lot of the people here in Connecticut, they don't know about Africa. The Department of Economic Development was not encouraging enough to go to Africa because they knew nothing about the continent.

I supplied a lot information door to door, what existed in Africa the raw materials, as Dr. Sandstrom mentioned it. We said we have a lot of empty warehouses. We can develop those by, you know, by bringing raw materials from Africa and do the processing here that will create jobs for the young people here, unemployed, in the city of Hartford, or the others, you know, towns. That never happened because the problem was lack of knowledge about Africa.

The only thing you hear about the war is the hunger and starvation. And very few people actually, who are involved, they know what Africa is all about. Few people are working hard, you know, from -- from state -- from country to country are -- like Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton have been there. They are trying to develop a small project that will give jobs to those unemployed Africans that can eliminate also

river blindness, malaria.

And I thought this huge country, the United States, can immediately get involved, and that's why we have to support the African Affairs Association, who has office here in this building. Frank Sykes was speaking a few minutes ago, and he told you what's available. I've been going door to door, try to talk and establish good relation with DECD, but they don't know nothing about Africa, absolute zero. And I thought the act, actually signed by the Governor, passed by the senate and the house, could be enforced. I say, how can we deal with it?

I was going in and out of Africa, and I stopped it because of lack -- problems, I didn't have much money and where to go from one country to another. I saw the Chinese as the Senator Frantz mentioned it down there, they're coming for instruction.. They're buying some of the raw materials, and they're doing very well. But still, actually, they take the material, like -- somebody mentioned I think it was Frank about Nigeria -- they're don't do the processing of their oil in Nigeria. It goes to, probably, like Shell Company, and comes back, and they can't afford to buy it. So if we really mean sincerely, I think we have to find a way to economically enforce that. This is a huge continent. There's a lot of opportunity.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR LEBEAU: (Inaudible.)

MOHAMOUD AHMED: I'm -- I'm the president, and I have the Professor Alan Gates who is the

vice president, who couldn't come here today.

SENATOR LEBEAU: You have -- I don't -- I'm looking through -- I don't see written testimony from you. Do you have written testimony?

MOHAMOUD AHMED: I think -- I gave some, you know, yeah.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Well, I didn't get it. Okay. Thank you.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: There's a lot of testimony I brought you there, mine --

SENATOR LEBEAU: You attached -- you attached it. I've got something that's similar to this from Leo Jefferson.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Yeah.

SENATOR LEBEAU: That's his name of the front page.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Yeah, he couldn't make it here. He's out of town.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Okay.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Yeah. But his testimony is right --

SENATOR LEBEAU: That's why I didn't see it, a different -- a different front page.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Okay.

SENATOR LEBEAU: On this one, which is the one you passed in.

So tell me about this group. It's a nonprofit? And where's it located and how -- do you have budget? Are you funded?

MOHAMOUD AHMED: No. We're not funded. We just use our own little money we have, and we try to go to even the City Hall of Hartford, City of Hartford. How they can, you know, put economic development together. How can they, you know, rebuild these empty warehouses in every street. I don't know some of you probably are aware of Hartford. There's a lot of empty warehouses. We said why shouldn't we bring some of these products that they have in Africa and process it here so that can open jobs for the unemployed people here. And we have support of the City, but, actually, they don't money to come up and rebuild these empty warehouses. We're just giving information country to country, like, say, in West Africa you have Ghana which is very stable; Nigeria, which is getting much better because of the oil; Cameroon, which is coming much better also. The only country is that's not doing very well is Cote d'Ivoire, and Cote d'Ivoire is in French, but, in English, they call Ivory Coast.

In East Africa, you have Kenya, Tanzania. These countries are very stable, but they need help in economic development. In North of the, you know, we don't deal with Egypt and Libya because, I mean, not because of the language problem but because they work with the Middle Eastern people, but they very stable also.

We're talking about Sub-Sahara of Africa that needs a lot of help, economically, also healthwise.

SENATOR LEBEAU: I see that at one point in the testimony, you submitted Dr. David Carter, from -- was the president of Eastern, is now the -- chancellor of the public university system.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: For the universities, yeah.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Have you approached him about working, in a sense, out of his -- under his aegis? And out of his offices in a sense?

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Yeah. We're not far from each other. He's just here on Woodland Street, and I gave him some of the flyers. He testified when this act was passed 1997. He was here and he wrote some article in the Hartford Courant, and Journal Enquirer and he's familiar. He went there too many times into the continent of Africa, especially, West Africa. And he's right here. He couldn't make it today to come and testify. This is a very important issue for him and for us, and he's working with us very closely. But the senate and the house, both of them, passed this act, but the DECD said, No. They completely ignored it.

SENATOR LEBEAU: And under this act what are they suppose to do? Under -- what are they -- what -- Mohamoud, what are they supposed to be doing under this act that was --

MOHAMOUD AHMED: They could be actually going there and finding out or talking to us and, say, you know, what kind of minerals, what kind of products, we can buy and sell into

what countries because they don't know. They appointed some guy they call, international trade, and they said they opened it and they want to go through to South Africa.

That's okay. When I -- the world affairs commission when I talk to them they say, Oh, there's a guy at the international trade, but he doesn't know nothing about Africa, absolutely zero. And they don't want to hear whether you call Africa Trade Information center because we're going from school to school also teaching about the conditions in Africa and what's available in Africa. The DECD has nothing to do with this us. But the only thing I was interested in, since you guys passed the act and the Governor has signed 1997. What happened after that?

SENATOR LEBEAU: They're supposed to communicate with you. There's supposed to work with you to try to enhance trade with Africa.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Yeah.

SENATOR LEBEAU: And there hasn't been communication?

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Absolutely zero, they thought we were, you know, probably we just -- because they don't know nothing about Africa. They don't want to talk to us.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Okay. Do you have any sense of why?

MOHAMOUD AHMED: I have no idea. Because they -- right from the beginning, when the senate passed and the house both of them and the Governor has signed it, I say let's

go and trade. Governor Roland signed this act. It was passed by the house and the senate unanimously. Then nothing has happened. It became an act of law. It is right there on the table, then what?

SENATOR LEBEAU: Unfortunately, I have to tell you that happens quite -- that happens often, not often, but it happens much too often, much more often than it should. And, yesterday -- yesterday, I was in the Transportation Committee hearing where a bill was passed to do a study on -- and Senator Frantz is very well aware of this -- a bill was passed to provide a half million dollars for a study of the future of Bradley International Airport, and, the administration just didn't do it. And that's a law also because it was a part of last year's budget, and I'm aware on this committee also, a variety of economic development agencies throughout the state that are were funded directly through the budget and the dollars were never spent. And it's disconcerting to see the will of the legislature just not even (inaudible) just ignored. It's an insult to us. It's an insult to those -- those -- those people like yourself who come and work for legislation, and it's really inappropriate.

And, frankly, it's also illegal in some sense, but it would take us going to the courts to try to force the administration to do the things that they're supposed to do. And you're talking here about the -- so it's -- and the fact that it's a -- you're talking about the Roland administration going back to that administration. It's been the law is still on the books, so we're not talking about any one particular administration. It just

seems there's a pattern here that is not a healthy pattern for democracy.

So further questions or comments? Did I lay that out there, Senator Frantz?

SENATOR FRANTZ: Just a quick one, thanks, as always quick.

Are you aware of another state that has a program that is a success or maybe another agency out there that we could look to as a template for what you are trying to achieve here?

MOHAMOUD AHMED: I think Frank had mentioned. Was that in Maryland? And, yeah, actually, probably most of you are thinking, you know, where the funds coming from? Maryland, when they established (inaudible) as an international trade. It was funded by the either the export/import bank or the federal bank. So they're reaching out certain African countries. If you don't have the money to establish and say, Okay, let's give few dollars to Mohamoud and his agency, and, probably with your powers, you can reach out to the federal government or the export/import bank that really fund this in a lot of African countries.

I don't know how they monitor it, what happens to that amount of money, but they are very much involved it enough. So with your authority you can reach our certain -- we're not asking money. They state there, there -- this, particularly, you know, the senate or the house, but, with your powers, you can reach out the federal or export/import bank to establish, you know, economical development between Connecticut, to start with, and certain stable African

countries.

SENATOR FRANTZ: Thank you very much.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Thank you. Just one quick question, have you had any direct contact with the Department of Commerce in Middletown?

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Yeah. We did actually.

SENATOR LEBEAU: The Federal Department of -- U.S. DOC.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Yeah, we did actually. Well, they said, We're doing whatever we can do. They didn't respond too quickly and --

SENATOR LEBEAU: Okay. Okay.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: And they used to be here and now they are in Middletown. The whole seminar is about international trade, and, you know, when I come with my Africa trade and say how do you -- this is an act of law signed by the government, by the state senators, the house. It exists. How can we work together?

SENATOR LEBEAU: Okay.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Oh, we'll think about it.

SENATOR LEBEAU: Think about it. Okay. Thank you. Thank you for being here today.

MOHAMOUD AHMED: Thank you. Yeah.

SENATOR LEBEAU: William Moore.



Joan McDonald  
Commissioner



State of Connecticut  
Department of Economic and  
Community Development

## ***TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE COMMERCE COMMITTEE***

*Joan McDonald, Commissioner  
Department of Economic and Community Development*

*February 19, 2009*

### ***SENATE BILL 880 AN ACT CONCERNING TRADE WITH AFRICA.***

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) offers the following comments in **opposition** to Senate Bill 880 AN ACT CONCERNING TRADE WITH AFRICA.

The mission of the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is to facilitate all international trade activities within the State of Connecticut. This includes recruiting foreign direct investment (FDI) into Connecticut, export assistance/trade promotion and performing protocol duties for visiting members of the international diplomatic corps.

DECD has taken a **global** approach to international trade promotion. This is done by first and foremost, educating Connecticut's manufacturing and service firms on the logistics and intricacies of the export process. Throughout the year, we provide counseling, seminars, workshops, etc. to train Connecticut companies on how to become "export-ready" and sell products or services to any country in the world. Second, we serve as a clearinghouse of information in order to keep companies abreast of global developments so that they may achieve their international business objectives.

To better assist Connecticut companies, DECD frequently works with the U.S. Department of Commerce (USDOC) local office in Middletown. Connecticut utilizes the USDOC's vast network of international trade specialists and commercial officers to help companies go global. DECD does not maintain paid staff offices or agents in foreign countries. Rather, DECD works through the USDOC worldwide network of over 160 offices in 90 countries. Through the USDOC network, we have established direct contacts at no cost to the State of Connecticut. This has been a very successful model which has been copied by many other states and Connecticut remains a national leader in international exports.

Additionally, Connecticut is a member state in the Eastern Trade Council, an organization of the ten Northeastern states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania) that works to promote trade opportunities and regional collaboration. The ten state group works together to coordinate regional participation at trade missions and trade shows. In fact, the Eastern Trade Council organized a November 2008 trade mission to South Africa, and is planning a Spring 2009 trade mission to Saudi Arabia.

Through our work with the USDOC and the Eastern Trade Council, Connecticut has achieved healthy and successful trade numbers through a model that is cost-effective to the Connecticut taxpayer. Additionally we believe that there should be a general global approach to international economic development. Connecticut has produced great results in trade and FDI with its limited resources.

Additionally, all of this information, plus much more, is reported every year in DECD's Annual Report which lists, in detail, the types of activities our International Division participated in.

Therefore, while this proposal may be well intended, the department believes that it would have a fiscal impact on the department and that this would not be the best use of taxpayer funding. Staff in DECD's International Division would have to divert time from assisting companies in order to compile information as to what they have been doing over the past several years to promote trade and assist companies in Africa. We feel staff time is better spent with clients. Additionally, we do not believe that paying someone to write, print, and disseminate a report containing information specific to one region is the most productive use of state funds, especially given the what is available in the agency's annual report.

Thank you for consideration of the department's comments on this proposal.



College of Arts and Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD



Department of Politics  
and Government

February 18, 2009

Honorable Members of the Commerce Committee:

It is a privilege to testify before you, just as it was twelve years ago when a strong bipartisan consensus of the Connecticut State Government was thwarted by mishandling and weak follow-up by the Commission of Economic Opportunity and Development.

I bring to the Committee graduate degrees in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of Pennsylvania; forty years of teaching at the University of Hartford about development in the so-called Third World including a decade of participation in the prestigious Yale-Wesleyan seminar on Southern African Research Problems; and teaching, research, and/or conferencing in South Africa, Egypt, Ghana, and Nigeria. I was also a delegate to the United States Summit on Africa under the Clinton administration, from which a strong call went forth for increased trade and cultural/educational exchange with the nations of Africa.

It is abundantly clear that a progressive state like Connecticut, with long-established manufacturing and export-import credentials, is in a strong position to develop economic ties of mutual benefit with stable and growing economies in Sub-Sahara Africa. Yet our wonderful state lags woefully in taking advantage of such opportunities, which would not only benefit established enterprises within our borders, but might well, in the clear vision of the Africa Trade and Information Center, Inc., bring dilapidated segments of the state's great cities to life with new opportunities for work on such things as coffee processing in abandoned buildings. Heaven knows, in our current and foreseeable economic climate, that such opportunities are desperately needed.

I urge the Commerce Committee to report favorably on Raised Bill no. 880 and to promote it vigorously among your distinguished colleagues so that, at long last, the damage that was done a dozen years ago when the clear will of our State Government was not heeded, can be repaired and our citizens can benefit from political leadership that, again, sees the need and opportunity to move forward with this low-to-no cost proposition to study what has and has not been done, and what can and ought to be done to promote the economic well-being of our beloved state.

Sincerely,

Harald M. Sandström, PhD  
Associate Professor, Politics & Government  
Coordinator, Political Economy Major  
University of Hartford



**An Act Concerning Connecticut Trade with Africa: SB 880**  
**Commerce Committee: February 18, 2009**

Chairman LeBeau, Chairman Berger, Vice-Chair Crisco, Vice-Chair Zalaskis and members of the Commerce Committee, I am here to testify in support of S.B. No.880, An Act Concerning Trade with Africa. I am originally from Ghana in Africa but that is not why I am testifying. I am testifying because I am an economist and originally from Ghana and I am a resident of Connecticut.

The idea of enhancing trade with Africa and CT is laudable for several reasons: not so much in the short-run as in the long-run when one might expect instabilities on the African continent to have subsided and democracy to have taken firm roots.

1. In a very real sense, Africa is the last frontier in economic development. It is the least developed of the continents and the one where trade can produce tremendous mutual benefits.
2. Attempts at helping the continent to develop have in the past been done through bilateral and multilateral grants which often served to benefit a few people and buttressed the power of the ruling classes.
3. Increasingly the world has come to realize that trade which is based on mutual benefits represents the best hope for Africa to develop; but the benefits from trade are not of the zero-sum type; all participants should benefit.
4. In the past, trading with and investing in Africa was fraught with risks. Some of the countries were (and still are) unstable; and where stable, the stability had been the result of strong men imposing their wills on the countries usually with the backing of the military. This made long-term relationships difficult and therefore confined trade to extractive industries (mining) and the import of only those goods which we could not produce at all; all of which produced little benefit to the people of Africa.
5. In the last decade, with the help of several international (both government and non-government) organizations, some of the countries have been set on paths to good governance, and with the help of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), some of the Sub-Saharan African countries now have sovereign bond ratings which should serve as guides to businesses.
6. It is estimated that some US businesses are earning returns of about 28% in Africa, far greater than in other parts of the world.

7. As countries in Africa benefit from good governance and create conditions for rapid economic growth, we, in CT, should be ready to not only engage but to do what we can to speed the process.
8. Several of the African nations are closer to Connecticut than the South East Asian countries with whom we now heavily trade. Transportation costs are therefore lower.
9. Many of the countries closer to CT, are English speaking (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria and to some extent The Cameroon). This should make it easier for communication and hence minimize costs. The 15 countries which make up the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have a total population of about 250 million. They are mostly poor, but the potential market is there.
10. Connecticut has a heavy machinery industrial sector which should be appealing to the developing African countries: just about all the countries in Africa are at points in their development when they will need these kinds of capital equipment.
  1. United Technologies exports AC and elevator equipments to South Africa. Given the fact that all of Sub-Sahara Africa is tropical, the potential for more AC exports could be quite big; but you must nurture the market and you can only do that if you are there from the onset.
  2. The benefits will accrue not only to the UTs (the big businesses) but also to the smaller ones. A chance encounter between Ms. Cohen-Fitzgerald, of Westport and a Ghanaian at a forum presented by the DECD in 1999 led to the Ghanaian being able to buy a cocoa processing machine from her. Ms. Cohen-Fitzgerald retained the rights to the cocoa powder and butter produced by the Ghanaian.
11. The same can be said of the financial services (particularly insurance) sector. Many of these countries are moving towards liberalizing their economies and the financial services companies in CT could be instrumental in helping the growth of the sector in Africa.
12. The tourism sectors of the African countries are still in their infancies. Along the coast of West Africa for example, one sees virgin territories which can be developed as tourists spots to benefit both Africa and hospitality businesses in CT.

Making a move now would give us a first-mover's advantage. China is already in the trenches and one can expect others to follow. Vodafone of UK recently took controlling shares in Ghana Telecom. We cannot afford not to be there.

The first step is the collection and dissemination of information about CT and Africa and that is why The African Trade and Information Center (ATIC) is a good beginning. It must be a center staffed with knowledgeable people who can answer questions on business possibilities and provide the leads for potential opportunities. An integral part of ATIC tasks should be organizing conferences and exchanges.

Thank you for hearing me.

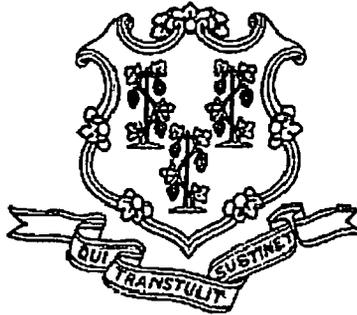
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Testimony before the Commerce Committee

Thursday, February 19, 2009

10:00 AM in Room 1D of the LOB

Good morning/afternoon Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger and ranking members of the Commerce Committee. My name is Frank Sykes and I am the Legislative Analyst with the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC). The Commission represents a voice on various issues impacting the African-American community in our state. I am here today speaking in support of SB 880 – *An Act concerning trade with Africa*.

We see this bill as an initial step towards building and strengthening trade and investment opportunities between Connecticut and the continent of Africa. It is our belief that in light of the current economic climate our state should take on new, bold initiatives capable of generating jobs in the long term. As such a study of DECD programs concerning Africa is timely. We are all aware of the unemployment situation in the state and the devastating impact it's having on communities. In 2007 the jobless rate was 4.6 percent and 5.7 percent in 2008. As of December of 2008 the rate is 7.1 percent.<sup>1</sup> Many businesses including

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *State Unemployment Rates*

small to mid size alike have suffered huge job losses some irreversible, yet small businesses play a crucial role in the creation and expansion of new jobs. In our state today there businesses eager to enter new markets such as Africa, yet the lack of knowledge, expertise and a real understanding of the region presents a challenge for many.

Africa is a complex region. For example there is no such thing as a common African culture. Africa comprises of 53 countries with over a 1000 indigenous languages. Even within national boundaries, there can be vast ethno-cultural differences among populations. The same applies to its economy, class structure, climate etc.<sup>2</sup> Western media has not helped in presenting an objective view of the continent as such misconceptions and misinformation persist. News from this part of the world is often negative, however layered under all the gloom and doom is also a continent with boundless opportunities. Opportunities in agrobusiness, infrastructure projects, healthcare etc. just to name a few.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) names Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia as countries with emerging market based economies. These are countries that have undertaken significant political and socio-economic reform over the last decade and are ripe for investment. It is projected that many more African nations will follow this path, creating even greater investment opportunities for Connecticut businesses. Therefore a study such as the one, being proposed is needed. It should provide a better understanding of the continent's opportunities, strengths, weaknesses and challenges. A study of this nature has the potential of laying the groundwork and potentially opening doors for increased businesses activity between the state of Connecticut and Africa.

A number of countries, states and even municipalities recognize the vast investment and trade opportunities Africa has to offer and have taken advantage.

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<sup>2</sup> World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision" United Nations

For example Prince George's county in Maryland has established an African Trade Office. Other municipalities have established formal and informal partnerships, cultural exchange programs etc. with different parts of Africa all in an attempt to strengthen ties and learn more about the continent. The time is right for Connecticut to do the same and pay more attention to this part of the world. We urge your support for this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.