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LABOR SECRETARY ACOSTA JOINS MURPHY, BLUMENTHAL, LAMONT TO SEE EASTERN CONNECTICUT MANUFACTURING JOB TRAINING PROGRAM FIRSTHAND

WASHINGTON – **U.S. Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn.)**, a member of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee, **U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.)**, and **Governor Ned Lamont** welcomed U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta to eastern Connecticut on Tuesday to showcase the success of the Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative. The initiative is a partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor and local manufacturers that has resulted in over 1,300 job placements at local manufacturers, including over 700 jobs at Electric Boat. At Murphy’s request, Secretary Acosta visited Connecticut to see the program firsthand. Murphy, Blumenthal, and U.S. Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-2) secured millions in federal funding for the manufacturing initiative, and continue to work with the Trump Administration to secure additional federal funding to strengthen Connecticut’s growing manufacturing industry.

The officials visited Quinebaug Valley Community College’s Manufacturing Pipeline training program and met with students enrolled in the “Manufacturing Pipeline Inside Machinist Course.” They then met with local manufacturers, pipeline graduates, and representatives from Electric Boat, the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, and the Connecticut Department of Labor at the new American Job Center in Uncasville. Finally, they visited General Dynamic Electric Boat in Groton. General Dynamic Electric Boat will need to hire 900 people in 2019 alone to keep pace with building two Virginia-class submarines a year.

“I’m really glad Secretary Acosta came today to see the Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative and talk to manufacturers and students firsthand. We have an exciting story

to tell about the boom in jobs in our submarine manufacturing supply chain, and the pipeline initiative is critical to making sure we have workers with the right skills to fill jobs in demand,” **said Senator Murphy**. “Today was important, but our work is not done. I’ll continue to advocate on the Senate Appropriations Committee for more federal funding to support these job training programs, and I will fight back against any proposals to cut this funding.”

“I appreciate the opportunity to see firsthand how workforce education is helping workers learn in-demand job skills here in Connecticut. Initiatives like the ones we saw today help to fill the current 7.1 million job openings across the nation with family-sustaining jobs,” **said Secretary Acosta**.

“More skilled training is the key to unlocking Connecticut’s workforce potential. Ongoing educational investments is vital to ensuring that we have a well-trained and highly skilled workforce to build the next generation of jet engines, helicopters, and nuclear-powered submarines. I am proud to stand with Senator Murphy and Governor Lamont as we fight to secure the funding which will produce the next generation of workers our local companies depend upon,” **said Senator Blumenthal**.

“Ideas and companies were born in or chose to come to Connecticut because although we don’t have silicon and we don’t have oil, we do have the best trained, most productive, most inventive workforce in the world,” **Governor Lamont said**. “From submarines to helicopters, to portable typewriters, generations of products were invented and produced here in Connecticut. I know how important it is to maintain that competitive edge and I remain committed to supporting this critical sector of our economy.”

“The Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline originated with the hard work of the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, who competed for and won a six-million-dollar federal grant award from the U.S. Department of Labor back in 2014 to jumpstart this effort,” **said Congressman Courtney**. “Since then, the pipeline has surpassed all targets and projections by over 228, and it’s helped Connecticut to meet the challenge of a growing workforce at the Electric Boat shipyard in Groton – all while adhering to the time-tested standards of the Fitzgerald Act, which ensures that trainees are equipped with quality credentials that aren’t limited to just one employer, and are transferrable to any part of the country. To see the Fitzgerald Act’s positive impact on the employment opportunities of today’s workforce is a real confirmation of its lasting effectiveness.”

“Advanced manufacturing has shown strong growth in Connecticut, and with an increasing number of workers in these careers nearing retirement age we need to help employers fill these positions that are providing good wages and expanding the state’s economy,” **said State Labor Commissioner Kurt Westby**. “These manufacturing pipelines offer a fast and efficient way to train people for in-demand jobs, and demonstrate the effectiveness of our successful federal and state partnership.”

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