

# Commerce Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No:** SB-132 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT-GERMANY TRADE

**Title:** COMMISSION.

**Vote Date:** 3/5/2026

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/17/2026

**File No.:** 70

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Commerce Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

The purpose of this bill is to establish the Connecticut – Germany Trade Commission, aimed to strengthen the economic relationship, namely through bilateral trade and investment, between the state of Connecticut and Germany. This commission exists to accomplish this by initiating joint action on policies of mutual interest, promoting business and academic exchange, encourage mutual infrastructure investments. This commission will encourage collaboration between Connecticut and Germany, benefiting both parties in terms of business, investment, educational exchange, and infrastructure growth.

## **SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:**

(As depicted in LCO No. 2806)

Added subdivision 13 which, extends membership to anybody who is well versed in matters relating to commerce if it is deemed necessary to do so by the 30 chairpersons of the joint standing committee.

Additional changes:

- Changed "." to "; and" in line 28.
- Added: "and (13)" in line 37.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

[Department of Economic and Community Development, Commissioner, Daniel O'Keefe](#)

supports the establishment of this bill, citing that the implementation of this bill directly correlates with the mission of DECD which is to develop and implement strategies to increase the state's economic competitiveness. He continues, emphasizing that Germany has the largest economy in Europe, and is effectively a global leader in numerous sectors; advanced manufacturing, automotive, engineering, and clean energy technologies, which, through the establishment of this bill, will allow Connecticut strengthened access into these sectors many of which already exist as the states strong suit namely aerospace and precision marketing. DECD recognizes that this bill will bolster the state's economy and allow German companies to view CT as the place to be when looking to enter the U.S market allowing investments into CT, creating jobs, strengthening the state's tax base, and driving long term economic growth.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

[Town of Rocky Hill, Mayor, Allan Smith](#) is in support of this bill. He cites that this bill would act as a step forward for Connecticut's economy. Rocky Hill is extremely familiar with German companies outsourcing within their town as it currently acts as the host for ARBURG Inc., a German founded advanced manufacturing company and is home to Henkel's Rocky Hill site which serves as the company's North American headquarters, as well as MTU Aero Engines North America which provides high – skill engineering services in the aerospace sector is also headquartered in Rocky Hill. Smith emphasizes that civically securing this relationship will deepen trade, investment, and will have overall institutional impacts considering the similarities in industry such as advanced manufacturing and precision supply chains.

[University of Connecticut, Professor of German Studies, Anke Finger](#) testified in support of this bill. Emphasizing that the establishment of the Connecticut-Germany Trade Commission is especially important as it has the ability to formalize and further strengthen the longstanding 37 year relationship between Germany and Connecticut. Within her capacity as a professor and the Director /Co-Director of two dual degree programs EUROTECH and EUROBIZ she has had firsthand experience in the opportunities her students are able to participate in due to UConn's connection to Germany. Students within these programs have extensive networks including, the German Consulate General in Boston, the German American Chamber of Commerce, the Germany Embassy in Washington D.C., the German programs in our schools, and the 150 German companies in Connecticut. Many of the students within these programs either have had the experience to intern within these spaces or are later able to obtain employment and even leadership positions within international companies such as MTU, BMW, ebm-pabst, TRUMPF, STOPA or SAP. Through this trade commission, trade between Connecticut and Germany will become stronger and will position Connecticut as a trusted and globally engaged partner.

[University of Connecticut, Professor of Political Science, Dr. Shareen Hertel](#) is in support of this bill due to the longstanding connection the State of Connecticut has maintained with Germany, seen through academic exchanges that have been vital in influencing the culture and politics of their respective locations. The implementation of this bill will positively impact the work conducted within higher education programs such as UConn's Baden-Württemberg Human Rights Research Consortium, which focuses on researching significant issues that impact both Connecticut and the German sister state of Baden-Württemberg. There has been longstanding evidence displaying that the relationship between

Connecticut and the German counterparts have been impactful in the research meant to improve their respective challenges.

**University of Connecticut, Associate Professor, Dr. Sebastian Wogenstein** is in support of this bill. As an Associate Professor of German and the Co-Director of the Connecticut/ Baden- Württemberg Human Research Consortium he believes that this bill is necessary in order to boost Connecticut's economy and to mitigate existing international tensions due to the current climate. He emphasizes that within his role he acts as an advisor for German studies majors and minors as well as a supervisor when they are abroad. Through this program many UConn students can study at prominent institutions in the German partner state of Baden- Württemberg. He continues to highlight that through this program many Connecticut students have been able to intern at notable companies including MTU Aero Engines, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, DLR German Aerospace, Bosch, Siemens, BASF, TRUMPF, Henkel, Unilever, Mahle, STIHL, Boehringer-Ingelheim, HeidelbergCement, and Philips with many later working within these companies upon graduating from UConn. From his purview, the state of Connecticut and Germany have both been able to profit from this connection and will only continue to strengthen the relationship between the two, and the establishment of this bill will signal that despite any contention on a federal level the state of Connecticut remains a trusted ally to Germany and the Global community.

**Michelle Buerkler**, a previous University of Connecticut student and an alumnus of the Connecticut-Baden-Württemberg exchange program. Buerkler cites this program as being influential in her career and in turn supports the implementation of The Connecticut- Germany Trade Commission. This bill has the power to promote business and academic exchanges between Germany and Connecticut, in turn leaving Connecticut students in an advantageous position, with the adequate experiences needed in order to thrive within many companies here in Connecticut. She states that due to it's beneficial nature to a variety of students, including those who attended the Connecticut-Baden-Württemberg exchange program or are participants in the Eurotech and Eurobiz programs, and these students familiarity with the country and many of their adjacent companies they would be good additions to the committee as representatives.

**Lee Mor Bushari** submitted testimony in support of this bill. As an alumni of UConn's Eurotech program from 2004 – 2009, Bushari found this experience to be extremely vital as it included nearly a year of study abroad in Europe, an internship in Germany, and a six-month internship in Switzerland. This experience contributed to their career, providing them with the ability to operate confidently in global business and impacted the trajectory of their career recognizing the benefits had as they continue to work in industries that Germany is known to champion. They conclude with an understanding that this bill, calling for academic and professional exchange between Connecticut and Germany will create long term value through its creation of globally minded professionals and focus on strengthening economic ties.

**Theodore Derek Rummel** is in support of this bill, explaining that due to their experience through UConn's exchange program with Baden-Württemberg, they have been able to grow professionally, and have been employed by BMW, a German company, for the past 11 years. Through his experience he notes that, Connecticut and Germany share industry similarities that result in natural collaboration as they are both leaders in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, automotive engineering, life sciences, and technology. In turn through the

fulfillment of this bill, a Connecticut- Germany Trader commission will be able to support students, strengthen business partnerships, encourage investment, and foster workplace development.

[Thomas Binder](#) is in support of this bill. Binder expresses that this bill will be beneficial to the residents of Connecticut due to its potential ability to provide employment. Alongside this, they believe that it will strengthen relations between both places, making Connecticut more competitive on a global scale in turn positively impacting the futures of Connecticut's children.

[Tejal Vallam](#) is in strong support of this bill. As a long time, resident of Rocky Hill, Vallam views Germany as one of Connecticut's most important economic partners due to the industries that Connecticut thrives in; strong, such as aerospace, manufacturing, engineering, and industrial technology. Communities like Rocky Hill exist as a hub for several major German companies, companies that exist as leaders within the industries that Connecticut champions. In turn, through instituting this bill, there is ensured economic growth as it will further establish Connecticut as a premier destination for global companies in the aforementioned industries.

[Luke Vancraeynest](#) is in support of this bill. As an alumni of Eurotech / International Engineering program at UConn, Vancraeynest recognizes, that German companies have increased interest in the state of Connecticut, with many opting to have significant sites for the companies in the state, in turn creating extensive employment opportunities an outcome that is beneficial to Connecticut residents.

[Aaditya Vyas](#) writes in support of this bill. Vyas, who participated in UConn's EUROTECH program has predominantly been employed by German companies located here in Connecticut. As a result of this Vyas testifies that formally solidifying the connection between Connecticut and Germany as it provides not only jobs but also bilateral trade and investment, joint action on policy, business and academic exchanges, and mutual investment and economic support.

[Karen Weinseiss](#) is in support of this bill, citing that Connecticut already has an economically beneficial relationship with Germany with existing German companies residing in the state, providing high quality employment for Connecticut residents and further strengthening relationships with a trusted economic partner will further secure Connecticut's economic future.

[Alison Mukhtar](#) is in support of this bill.

[Anonymous 10](#) & [Anonymous 6](#) are both in support of this bill. Due to their beliefs that this bill will create strategic, economic, and political advantages for Connecticut due to the similarities between their industries. Further strengthening the preexisting relationship between Connecticut and Germany.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

[Harland Christofferson](#) writes in opposition to S.B. 132. Although this bill could be beneficial in terms of encouraging trade, academic and business exchanges, policy discussion, or infrastructure between Connecticut and Germany this bill has the possibility to harm Connecticut residents and the state's economy. Christofferson believes that the state should rather focus on attracting American companies to Connecticut and prioritize the job creation, and economic growth through an American avenue rather than looking internationally.

[Adam Orsini](#) is in opposition to this bill. Orsini emphasizes that within the current economy a focus needs to be had on America instead of other countries, and the state of Connecticut needs to prioritize investing in Connecticut businesses that already exist within the state.

**Reported by: Enumaah Dadzie, Assistant Clerk      Date: 3/13/2026**