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LETTERS

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**Outsourcing Is
Another Threat to Jobs**

To The Editor:

Continued funding of major military programs isn't the only fear of thousands of residents employed in the aerospace industry ("Defending Connecticut's Defense Industry," April 25). The other fear is outsourcing. As defense contractors push for greater efficiencies, many believe it's only a matter of time before their job is moved to low-cost labor markets overseas.

It doesn't have to be that way. Connecticut already has implemented a program that's helping dozens of small aerospace manufacturing companies compete internationally.

Aerospace Components Manufacturers (A.C.M.), an association of 43 smaller companies with combined employment of about 3,500, recently was awarded \$212,500 in grants to help members transition to 'lean' manufacturing, the new international standard for efficiency and employee empowerment. Half of the money comes from the United States Department of Commerce and the other half from the state through the Governor's Council on Economic Competitiveness and Technology, under a program administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Connecticut Economic Resource Center. Grants are matched by A.C.M. participants.

Under these grants, companies can streamline internal procedures and help aerospace purchasing managers create greater savings by looking beyond a simple comparison of labor costs.

Clearly, if labor pricing were the only factor determining where to purchase goods, Connecticut companies couldn't be as competitive. However, by including consideration of quality, reliability, turn-around time, the vagaries of long distance ship-

ping, and the cost of dispatching agents across the globe to oversee production, the equation changes.

Overseas competition is a fact of life. Connecticut's programs can help purchasing managers shift from a simple comparison of manufactured costs to a new realization of true total procurement costs. Continued state and federal support for programs like those run by A.C.M. is one way keep Connecticut's competitive edge and its jobs.

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