I would like to begin by thanking the Speaker Salvatore DiMasi and his leadership team for sponsoring these “Job Creation Listening Tours” around the Commonwealth. This is indeed an important time in the economic life of the Commonwealth to conduct these hearings and I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today.

My name is Alana Wiens. I am the Project Director of the Commonwealth Information Technology Initiative, better known as CITI. Dean Andrew Effrat and Professor Adrion could not be here today.

CITI is a public/private partnership established to increase the number of information technology fluent workers needed for the Massachusetts knowledge-based economy.

Led by the University of Massachusetts Amherst and begun in 2000 to strengthen computer and information systems education across the 29 public community colleges, state colleges, and university campuses, CITI has a strong record of unprecedented accomplishment. However, because of a state fiscal crises in 2002, CITI lost its state funding for two years. In 2004, CITI received support through the passage of the Economic Stimulus Bill specifically from the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Pipeline Fund managed by the Board of Higher Education. This renewed BHE funding ($500,000), leveraged by a major private sector corporate match ($500,000) enabled CITI to invest strategically in K-16 public education curricula, programs and teacher development.

CITI is a unique program. We have created a partnership that encompasses all 29 public higher education institutions and K-12 school districts across the state. We’ve used that partnership to build cooperation across institutions and education levels.

Our goal is to increase the number of IT fluent workers for the Massachusetts knowledge-based economy. This year we have worked toward that goal in the following ways:

- At the K-12 level we have awarded over $180,000 in grants to programs in the Berkshires, Pioneer Valley, Central Massachusetts and Boston MetroWest to provide professional development in IT education and
integration to 163 teachers with a first year impact of 14,000 students and direct student programs to 200 high needs students to provide technology skills.

- At the higher education level we have awarded $330,000 in grants to support programs at 14 public campuses across MA. These programs include partnerships to maximize resources to address common issues and build a base of IT and IT related courses available to public higher education students. In institutional grams we are supporting programs to develop and enhance IT programs, minors and certificates on 9 campuses, including several to institutions with high minority populations.

These programs are reaching students. They have higher rates of female and minority participation than traditional computer science programs. They are equipping students with the “new fundamental” of technology skills and opening up a world of education and career possibilities to them.

Within the next few months we will be continuing our work with the following new programs:

- At the K-12 level we will be bringing together K-12 district teams from across Massachusetts to create model modules integrating IT skill training into their existing curriculum. Then we will be bringing those models to the rest of the state and providing support for replication.

- In pre-service training for teachers we will be investing in technology integration training to prepare teachers to bring these skills into their jobs as public school teachers in Massachusetts.

This has been an ambitious year for CITI. $1 million dollars to create the partnerships, build the cooperation, forge ties with industry, support the programs, start the dialogue and provide leadership. We’ve been very fortunate to have the support of the Massachusetts Software Council, the Network Communications Council, the Associated Industries of Massachusetts and school districts and campuses across Massachusetts. This successful year would not have been possible without the support of the STEM Pipeline Fund.

Over the past year we have worked with the PreK-16, the Board of Higher Education and other organizations within the STEM Pipeline Fund to build on success and maximize benefits for students.

Working closely with a coalition of support from the PreK-16 Networks to the STEM Collaborative, BATEC and others, CITI looks to the Legislature and your work in this year’s Economic Stimulus bill to build on the momentum and success of Education Reform Act of 1993. CITI is ready to help lead this effort to extend education reform through strengthening the STEM Pipeline Fund and help prepare our students for careers in an ever demanding global economy.

CITI supports the effort to recapitalize the STEM Pipeline Fund with $8 million in each of the next five fiscal years. This will be accomplished with state funding of $4 million each year for five years, leveraged with federal funding of $4 million per year available through the BHE and state DOE. An additional $2 million in private sector matching funds will make the total state funding of $20 million for 5 years worth $50 million of focused STEM Pipeline activities over the next 5 years.
The potential market for CITI is significant. It includes an approximate total of 1 million K-12 attending 380 school districts and 180,000 college students attending Massachusetts 29 public institutions.

According to the state Board of Higher Education, two thirds of Massachusetts high schools graduates who go on to college stay in the state, and those who do, 67% chose public institutions in 2002. Upon graduation 85% of public higher ed graduates stay in the Massachusetts economy.

Massachusetts’ future as a robust and vital center of economic activity is dependent on a workforce that is fluent in the use of information technology tools as well as able to understand the underlying principles and potential applications of information technology. Today’s workplace increasingly requires IT fluency for workers in a wide variety of industries and occupations, from finance and health care to manufacturing and retail.

CITI believes that the Pipeline Fund programs play a vital role in preparing all students to succeed in an increasingly technology oriented workforce.

Thank you again for this opportunity to speak before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have and I am available to your staff for any follow up that is necessary.