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Sent: Thursday, December 1, 2016 7:56 PM
To: Blake Haynie; Ben Davis; Bill Micale; Keith Almond; Lars Keeley; Steven Wilson; Steve Foster; Bob Casey; David Edgren
Subject: Fwd: Goodbye, Connecticut: It's just too expensive here

By Alan and Gerald Zordan | Posted: Saturday, November 14, 2015 8:00 am

With the Litchfield hills and Connecticut in our rear-view mirror as we move our 101-year-old manufacturing company to South Carolina, we are nostalgic, excited, and disappointed.

We love Torrington and Connecticut but not all the things the General Assembly and the governor have done to induce us to leave family and friends behind. After more than a century of manufacturing in Connecticut, we are not looking for handouts.

We have paid our fair share, but enough is enough.

Connecticut's high cost of doing business and its anti-employer attitude have finally driven us out. We are not moving for any government incentives.

Consider these facts:

- We sold our 50,000-square-foot building for enough money to buy a 100,000-square-foot building — and still had enough money left to pay for the transport of 100 trailer loads of machinery and equipment to our new site.
- The property taxes on our big new facility in South Carolina are much less than those on our smaller former building in Connecticut.
- Our utility costs in South Carolina, especially for electricity, will be about a third of what we paid here, though our space will more than double.
- We are taking a third of our employees with us and paying them the same wages. With South Carolina's lower cost of living, it is as if they are getting a big raise. And we pay our new employees in South Carolina competitive local wages.

These savings could no longer be ignored.

At the same time, the constant hostility of the General Assembly, the governor, and state agencies, particularly the state Labor Department, settled the matter against staying in Connecticut.

Year after year employers like us have to fight off efforts to:

- Expand state requirements for paid sick leave.
- Increase the highest minimum wage in the nation to \$15 per hour and more.
- Require paid family and medical leave.

- Impose unworkable restrictions on workforce scheduling.
- Restrict our ability to talk to our employees about union organizing efforts.
- And, of course, make us pay for every new “investment” policymakers think is a good idea.

We have always believed that to attract the best employees, we need to be among the best employers. We have never paid minimum wage and we have always offered our employees excellent benefits, including health insurance plans, paid vacation time, disability insurance, a 401(k) plan with employer matching contributions, profit sharing, and other time off based on individual needs.

Some people in authority in Connecticut refuse to understand that a mandated \$15 minimum wage would mean that companies like ours would have to raise pay across the board. It would mean that rather than investing in our company and being able to create more jobs, we would have to raise pay for all employees, including those who are already being paid a good wage. These cost increases would cause us to raise the price of our product and become less competitive with companies outside Connecticut.

To make it worse, staying in Connecticut would require us to speculate on how much more our taxes and costs will go up as state government fails to pass a balanced budget.

Under the current administration state government has imposed nearly \$4 billion in tax increases and still runs a deficit.

We can't afford to wait for the governor and the legislature to see they have a spending problem and to address it. We can't wait for state government to make any more “investments” by giving our money to a few favored companies.

Perhaps the final straw for us was our mind-boggling treatment by the Labor Department, which actually awarded unemployment compensation to an employee who was fired for threatening a supervisor with physical harm.

No one is surprised that the only state agency we heard from when the word got out that we were thinking of leaving was the Labor Department, which insisted that we allow it into our company to conduct a seminar for our employees to tell them how to get all the benefits they were entitled to.

So, farewell to home, family, and friends. We have been forced to move to a place where we are welcomed and wanted.

Regrettably, it is no longer Connecticut.

Alan and Gerald Zordan own Borgeson Universal Co. in Torrington, which produces steering components and has operated in Torrington since 1914.