

Capitol Testimony

Hello my name is Philip Rice, and I am here to speak in support of bill #5869 regarding agriscience program funding. I live in New Milford Connecticut, but I am enrolled as a student at Nonnewaug High School in Woodbury, CT, I made this life changing decision at the age of thirteen. I am a senior currently in the Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience & Technology Program and taking Ag. Production. This class covers everything from Dairy Herd Management, Food Science, and Biotechnology to meat processing. After my senior year I will be going to Cobleskill College in New York State to major in Agriculture business management. My goal after college is to work in a program that helps farms that are in need of advice in managing their finances, so that they can thrive.

Getting into an agriscience program is extremely difficult. There are applications, resumes, and you also need references saying that you have experience in agriculture. Not all kids make it that should; I was one of the lucky ones. I thought that I wasn't going to make into Nonnewaug because I was on the waiting list, I couldn't see someone else dropping out of such a great program, but they did. Because of this I find myself extremely fortunate, I can honestly say that I don't know where I would be if I hadn't made it into Nonnewaug's program, but I do know that I wouldn't be as far as I am now.

From my freshmen year I have changed greatly, and Nonnewaug has a lot to do with it. When I first came to Nonnewaug I was a typical student that didn't have any idea about life. Little by little I worked my way up, by participating in chapter FFA events then making my way to national FFA events. I have attended the National FFA

Convention twice my first time I competed in the National meats evaluation career development event, and my second year I was a representative for the Woodbury FFA Chapter. Going to Nationals is a great experience for all, since over 500,000 students like myself take part in FFA and Agriscience programs across the country. Now I am a Woodbury FFA Chapter officer as the Student Advisor, I assist the officers in planning and running FFA activities; I also act a liaison between FFA members and officers.

The Ellis and Clark Ag. Program is the best thing that has happened to me, and I can say that I am honored to be attending this school. At Nonnewaug they don't just test your knowledge but they also test your leadership skills. The FFA has several teaching objectives such as leadership, public speaking, and learning how to work well with others. These are three essential "people" skills for succeeding in life and I feel that it should be taught in all high schools. Since Nonnewaug has helped me I have found life easier and I have become more comfortable in leadership positions. This is why I urge you to pass Bill 5869, this will increase funding for these 19 Ag centers across Connecticut, and more students (future leaders) like myself will be able to enroll and benefit from these programs. Also I feel that more kids should get the same experience that I have received, it is truly life changing.

Thank you very much for listening to me. Hope you all have great day.