



Written Testimony by David G. Carter, Chancellor
Connecticut State University System

Before the
Committee on Public Health
Friday, February 29, 2008

My schedule does not permit me to appear before you today but I wanted to urge your support of Senate Bill 246, *An Act Establishing a Loan Forgiveness Program for Historically Underrepresented Students Pursuing Careers in Nursing*.

I applaud proponents of Senate Bill 246 to establish a loan forgiveness program for students of racial or ethnic minority groups who are pursuing a degree leading to licensure as a registered nurse. As the Chancellor of the Connecticut State University System (CSUS), I have responsibility for a four Universities (Central Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University, and Western Connecticut State University). The CSU System has graduated the most nurses with bachelor's degrees in the past five years.

Connecticut faces a significant nursing shortage. The Connecticut League for Nursing report (2005) suggests that Connecticut ranks 49th out of 50 states in producing nurses at only 19 per 100,000, while the national average is 31 per 100,000. In 2005 Connecticut faced a 20% shortage of RNs. By 2010, this shortage is projected to increase to 33% and by 2020 the shortage is expected to be 57%. At current graduation rates Connecticut is projected to have the second greatest decline in the supply of nurses nationally, significantly impacting the safety of patient care.

Beyond this, it is critical that students, especially women and minorities who are underrepresented in these fields, pursue nursing education at the college level and graduate level and seek careers in this area. Senate Bill 246 encourages such underrepresented groups to pursue a nursing degree while protecting the State's interests by incenting them to remain here to live and work.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my comments with you today. Please feel free to contact Jill E. Ferraiolo, Associate Vice Chancellor for Government Relations/Communications, should you like any additional information or have any questions regarding this matter.