



Government Administrations and Elections Committee

Testimony by

Ed Klonoski

**Executive Director, Board for State Academic Awards
President, Charter Oak State College**

Monday, March 16, 2009

Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone and members of the Government Administrations and Elections Committee.

I am Ed Klonoski, Executive Director of the Board for State Academic Awards and President of Charter Oak State College, and I wish provide written testimony concerning **HB 6375: AN ACT CONCERNING REVIEW AND TERMINATION OF CERTAIN BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**.

Specifically, I write to express my support for the **Commission for Educational Technology** (CET). The CET was created in 1999 by then Lt. Governor Rell, and I have been part of its work in all the years that followed.

I represent Charter Oak State College and the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium. Charter Oak State College is Connecticut's online public college. For the past 36 years, Charter Oak has served adult students finishing their associate's and bachelor's degrees. Our focus has always been degree completion for working adults, and this focus makes us a part of the solution for incumbent worker education. Over the past ten years, we have added a robust catalog of distance learning courses—198 at last count—to our original offerings of testing for credit, portfolio credits, and a flexible transfer credit policy.

For the past 11 years, the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC) has been providing eLearning Services to Connecticut's higher education institutions, its K-12 and Adult Education providers, and to various state agencies. Those services center on technology hosting—providing the servers, IT staff, and help desk personnel for the Learning Management Systems that DL providers require—online student services including tutoring; and online high school and adult education programs.

As these descriptions suggest, both the College and the CTDLC make extensive use of the key services created and overseen by the CET. The College relies on the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) and iConn, the State's virtual library, as critical components of its online education efforts. The CTDLC delivers all of its technical services using bandwidth provided by

the CEN. Like the rest of both public and private higher education, the CEN is one of the key utilities required to deliver 21st century higher education, and iConn is a collaborative, cost saving approach to research.

But the CET is more than its successful programs. It is the incubator for innovation in technology mediated education. The CET supported the CTLDC when it was creating its plans for a virtual high school offering online coursework to all the high school students in the state. It was the CEN staff that provided the resources to write the state's eRate applications each year. Most critically in these challenging economic times, it was the CET that provided the vision, the collaborative spirit, and agency energy that produced the reduced rates for our network bandwidth, saving higher education and the state significant dollars.

I believe that the CET is a no cost, high value commission that supports the work of the College and the CTDLC. The reality is that the responsibilities it shoulders continue, so it will need to be re-created in some form in order to provide multi-agency oversight to key projects. For example, Executive Order 19 requires that some sort of external group provide oversight and advice regarding the CEN, a role currently provided by the CET.

This Committee and the General Assembly are faced with many difficult decisions this session, but this particular decision is not difficult. The CET has provided real value and has the potential to provide more, plus it does not cost the state money (beyond donated time from its members). I urge you to continue the Commission for Educational Technology.