

Testimony  
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee  
March 5, 2009

**HB 6335 AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH  
CENTER FACILITIES PLAN**

Senator Handley, Representative Willis, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, my name is Bruce Liang. I am here today to speak in support of the replacement hospital for UConn Health Center.

Currently, I am the Ray Neag Distinguished Professor and Director of the Pat and Jim Calhoun Cardiology Center. I received my MD degree from Harvard Medical School. I moved from University of Pennsylvania to University of Connecticut in 2002 to assume my current position because of UConn's vision of delivering excellent clinical care through cutting edge research, through evidence-based practice of medicine, and through being a role model and a teacher to the next generation of doctors. UConn's vision of a medical school integrated with an academic hospital is and shall remain the key to providing the best medical care in the world, and for sure, in the state of Connecticut as well. When academic medicine goes down, so will rest of the medical care system. When the vision of an integrated medical school and hospital goes, so will academic medicine. When American academic medicine goes, our society will no longer offer quality care because there will be few if any researchers and teachers left to train quality doctors.

Looking back to 7 years ago when I began my professional life in Connecticut, I have no regret with my decision to move to Connecticut. Since then, I am pleased and proud to have contributed to making medical discoveries for new ways to diagnose and treat heart disease, to providing quality comprehensive care to Connecticut citizens with heart disease, and to training the next generation of doctors. None of this can be achieved without being part of an integrated medical school contiguous with a university hospital where academic values are promoted. The geographical proximity between hospital and medical school has allowed us to link clinical research from bedside to discoveries at the research lab bench. Without having the medical school and a university hospital under one roof, many of the discoveries would not have been possible and much of the training could not have taken place. Taking it one step further, some of the training could not have been offered for Connecticut programs such as the open heart and angioplasty programs at Waterbury and St. Mary Hospitals. As you know, we have been a past and a current supporter of the Waterbury programs in the last 5 years. My personal experiences have taught me the importance of a medical school contiguous with a university hospital.

Having served at 3 university hospitals (Brigham and Women's, University of Pennsylvania and University of Connecticut hospitals), I am convinced that a university hospital needs to have an updated physical plant with enough space to attract the diversity and talents to train the next generation of physicians and surgeons. It is a classroom for these future care providers. It is a place where new biomedical knowledge can not only be discovered but also be applied to the benefit of patients. It is a place where the culture and environment of discovery and teaching are special, unique, and in fact, precious.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you and I hope that you will support the replacement of John Dempsey Hospital as an updated university hospital at UConn's Farmington campus under the current bill.