



# University of Connecticut

Testimony

Submitted  
By

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Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee  
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 6521, *An Act Concerning Collegiate Commemorative Number Plates*. My name is Lisa Lewis and I am employed by the University of Connecticut as the Executive Director of the University of Connecticut Alumni Association.

The State of Connecticut has implemented successful license plate programs for a number of important causes including the Long Island Sound plate and an animal control plate. The purpose of the proposed collegiate license plate bill is to allow higher education institutions to benefit from this same type of successful program.

The current collegiate plate program operates under a cumbersome process requiring an individual to make an upfront, one-time donation to the university, get a signed form from the school's foundation, provide the form to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and then order the plate. With so many steps in the process, there have been very few collegiate plates issued. We hope to make it easier for residents to get a collegiate plate.

In addition, the current program requires only a one-time donation for the plate. We are missing the opportunity to have a long-term, additional source of support for our higher education institutions. We support modeling the collegiate plate program after the current animal control plate program which has an additional biennial renewal fee. The bill will accomplish both objectives.

Under the the legislation, a resident will pay an additional \$55 to acquire a collegiate plate. DMV will receive \$15 to cover the administrative costs and the

universities will receive \$40. Upon the biennial renewal of the plate, DMV will receive \$5 and the university will receive the remainder of the fee. In line 79 of the current bill, the renewal fee is \$15 and we recommend replacing that with a \$55 renewal fee to be consistent with the acquisition fee. The universities' portions of the fees collected from DMV will flow back to the institutions after the plates are acquired or renewed to be used for scholarships or alumni outreach efforts.

The new collegiate plate program outlined in House Bill 6521 will make it easier for alumni, students, friends and fans of higher education institutions to get collegiate plates and show their pride in their universities. In addition, Connecticut residents will be able to acquire collegiate plates directly from DMV, making the process simple for the customer.

Participation in this collegiate license plate program is purely voluntary for those who want to show their school pride through their license plate and support their universities. Higher education institutions must demonstrate a demand of 400 plates before the new program is implemented. This will ensure that the DMV is not expending resources on plates with low demand.

This type of collegiate plate program is also a tremendous way to enhance visibility and support for public higher education. A number of other states across country have successfully implemented collegiate license plate programs. When you drive into those states, you are constantly reminded of the proud Gators, Bruins, Boilermakers, or Tigers that live in those states. Connecticut residents have that same passion for our universities, but it is difficult to express that pride through the current collegiate license plate program.

For example, the University of Connecticut has more than 110,000 alumni living in the state, 28,000 students and 9,000 faculty and staff. Husky pride touches almost every Connecticut family, yet there are very few Husky plates on the road. This bill will help our alumni, fans and friends show their pride in UConn, make a statement about the strong support of higher education, and provide an ongoing source of additional revenue to support scholarships, students and alumni outreach efforts.

In closing, I would just like to thank the Committee for raising House Bill 6521 and ask for your support of the bill as it moves through the legislative process.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.