

TEXT ONLY



Written Testimony Submitted by  
David G. Carter, Chancellor  
Connecticut State University System  
to the  
Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Tuesday, February 3, 2009

Members of the Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I regret that due to other commitments, I am unable to appear before you today. I do, however, wish to submit comments for your consideration on the following proposed bills:

Proposed Senate Bill 119, *An Act Concerning Tuition Waivers for Veterans Taking Summer and Intersession Classes at Public Colleges and Universities.*

Proposed Senate Bill 566, *An Act Concerning Tuition Waivers for Certain Veterans Enrolled in Public Colleges or Universities.*

Proposed House Bill 5094, *An Act Concerning In-State Tuition for All Veterans, Their Spouses, and Their Dependents.*

The Connecticut State University System is proud to provide educational opportunities to veterans through waiver of tuition at our four universities: Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Connecticut State Universities. We have extended this benefit approximately 693 times to veterans attending full time in FY 2009. Beyond this, the Board of Trustees has extended over 588 fee waivers to veterans attending part time in the same time period.

As you know, Section 10a-99(d) of the Connecticut General Statutes extends tuition waivers to any dependent child of a person whom the armed forces of the United States has declared to be missing in action or to have been a prisoner of war while serving in such armed forces after January 1, 1960; any veteran having served in time of war, as defined in subsection (a) of section 27-103, or who served in either a combat or combat support role in the invasion of Grenada, October 25, 1983 to December 15, 1983, the invasion of Panama, December 20, 1989 to January 31, 1990, or the peace-keeping mission in Lebanon, September 29, 1982 to March 30, 1984; any active member of the Connecticut Army or Air National Guard enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting program; or for any dependent child or surviving spouse of a person who was killed in action while performing active military duty with the armed forces of the United States on or after September 11, 2001.

Section 10a-99(f) requires that the System's Operating Fund be reimbursed (through an annual appropriation) for the amount by which the tuition waivers granted exceed 2½% of tuition revenue. The intent of this section is to neutralize the fiscal impact of such waivers by reimbursing CSUS for a portion of these expenditures (faculty and related costs to educate the students). However, as you can see from the Chart below, such reimbursements have never been made and, as a result, the Universities have had to absorb these costs.

With the number of veterans increasing due to global conflicts in recent years, the number of waivers granted has increased. We have every reason to believe that this will continue, placing additional strains on already limited resources. Let me be clear. I do not disagree with the public

policy decisions that have been made to respond to the very real needs of our veterans, who have given so much for our country and for each of us. It is essential, however, that policy makers are fully cognizant of the fiscal ramifications of such decisions.

### ***FEDERAL EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR VETERANS***

As you consider these matters, I know that you are also aware of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, known as "the Post-9/11 GI Bill." It is the new federal education benefit program for individuals who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. Benefits payable under this program, which are significantly more far-reaching than the World War II era GI Bill, will be available for training and education pursued on or after August 1, 2009.

Veterans who have served at least 90 days on active duty after September 10, 2001 are eligible for the program, which provides up to 100% payment for tuition and fees, as well as an allowance for books and housing. This benefit offers another option for veterans in addition to the Montgomery GI Bill or other Federal Educational Assistance programs assisting veterans. Needless to say, as with most federal regulations, the details of the bill are somewhat complex, and we will be reviewing them closely to be sure that veterans receive every benefit to which they are entitled.

Towards that end, the Connecticut State University System is currently working with Commissioner Linda Schwartz and the state Department of Veterans Affairs to prepare for what she, and we, believe may be an influx of veterans, returning from Afghanistan and Iraq, who will choose to attend higher education. We will be working with Commissioner Schwartz to review the way in which Federal and State tuition benefits work together to ensure that veterans – both pre and post 9/11 – are treated fairly and equitably.

We have also taken steps at each of our universities to make our campuses more welcoming places for our veterans, developing drop-in centers where vets can be with each other, seek assistance from individuals to ease their transition, and pursue their education. We understand that even more can and should be done, and we are committed to doing so. I must commend Commissioner Schwartz and her office for their willingness to work with us, and for their dedication to our veterans.

As you consider the proposed legislation, please know that the Connecticut State University System is proud to honor any waivers deemed appropriate by the General Assembly for the brave citizens who have served our country, as well as the families of those who have given their lives to preserve our freedom.

Please contact Jill E. Ferraiolo, Associate Vice Chancellor for Government Relations/Communications, if you require any additional information or have any questions regarding this matter.

*(See chart attached on following page)*

### Historical Summary of Tuition Waiver Reimbursement

	Actual/ Projected	2.5% of Projected	Reimbursement Required	Actual
	Tuition Waivers	Tuition Revenues	By State Statute	Reimbursement Received
1996- 97	\$ 1,292,950	\$ 1,040,983	\$ 251,967	\$ -
1997- 98	\$ 1,326,485	\$ 1,053,154	\$ 273,331	\$ -
1998- 99	\$ 1,241,284	\$ 1,097,315	\$ 143,969	\$ -
1999- 00	\$ 1,139,018	\$ 1,151,850	\$ -	\$ -
2000- 01	\$ 987,251	\$ 1,173,036	\$ -	\$ -
2001- 02	\$ 891,862	\$ 1,360,039	\$ -	\$ -
2002- 03	\$ 908,320	\$ 1,455,750	\$ -	\$ -
2003- 04	\$ 1,035,526	\$ 1,679,092	\$ -	\$ -
2004- 05	\$ 1,282,469	\$ 1,873,912	\$ -	\$ -
2005- 06	\$ 1,339,259	\$ 2,024,761	\$ -	\$ -
2006- 07	\$ 1,426,299	\$ 2,179,720	\$ -	\$ -
2007- 08	\$ 1,530,835	\$ 2,299,170	\$ -	\$ -
2008- 09	\$ 1,564,091	\$ 2,478,885	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,965,649</b>	<b>\$18,575,811</b>	<b>\$ 669,267</b>	