



Written Testimony Submitted by
David G. Carter, Chancellor
Connecticut State University System
to the
Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Tuesday, March 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 Proposed Senate Bill 901, *An Act Concerning Fees Paid by Members of the Connecticut National Guard at Community-Technical Colleges, The Connecticut State University System and The University of Connecticut.*

The Connecticut State University System is proud to provide educational opportunities to members of the National Guard at our four universities: Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Connecticut State Universities. We have extended this benefit approximately 143 times to members of the National Guard in FY 2009. With the number of members of the National Guard called to active duty due to global conflicts in recent years, the number of waivers granted has been increasing. We have every reason to believe that this will continue, placing additional strains on already limited resources.

However, there is good news. 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 include both tuition and fees, which are significantly more far-reaching than the World War II era GI Bill, and will be available for training and education pursued on or after August 1, 2009.

Rather than considering different bills on these and related matters, I would urge that you convene a working group immediately, including members of the constituent units of higher education, to examine the adequacy of the current statutes and draft language that coordinates state and federal benefits and more importantly, ensures that members of the National Guard as well as our other veterans (both pre and post 9/11) receive all the educational benefits due to them.

The Connecticut State University System is proud to support educational opportunities for members of the National Guard and our veterans - they are 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.