

**Testimony for Charter Oak State College – Delores Bell**  
**Appropriations Committee – Public Hearing**  
**February 13, 2009**

Good evening, Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Delores Bell and I reside in Hartford, CT. I am here for two reasons: to read the combined testimony of two students in the CT WAGE program who are unable to attend this hearing and give you and update on the CT WAGE program.

**I would now like to read the combined testimony of Gloria Deyo and Tracey Monterio, who both reside in Torrington, Connecticut.**

We are unable to attend the meeting this evening and would like Delores Bell to read this on our behalf.

We would like to address the importance of the CT Wage program for adults pursuing their degree. This program has allowed us to continue our education so that we can become self sufficient and contributing members of society.

This has been such a wonderful program for us thus far and without this program it would have been impossible to continue our education without taking out unmanageable loans. When we both applied, we were not sure if we were going to be considered for such a wonderful program. We were together when we received the call from the Coordinator, Delores Bell. We were so excited and grateful when she said that we were accepted. We told everyone about the opportunity that we had to continue our education and gave all the credit to the CT Wage program.

The idea of someone helping us out was unbelievable and amazing. Ms. Bell offered her expertise to help us determine the correct path to achieving our educational goals. During the orientation, we were given books, laptops and the training to get started with our online courses. Wow, what an amazing thing to do for struggling single mothers like us! It has allowed us to show our children that it is never too late to get an education and to strive for what you want.

Thank you for granting the funds for the CT Wage program. We hope that you will continue to fund the program so that it can continue to help single, hard working mothers. We need all the support we can get.

Sincerely,  
Gloria Deyo  
Tracey Monterio

In terms of an update, 43 students have been recruited for the CT WAGE Student. Five students have graduated with their Associates degree and one with a Bachelor's degree. And we maintain an 80% retention rate with 36 active students currently in the program.

Although we have taken some cuts, the program remains in the FY10 budget. We are very pleased and appreciative and hope that the members of the General Assembly will continue their support.

Last year I stated that my target population for recruitment was men. I have recruited nine men into the CT WAGE program. The effort to recruit males has been difficult because many of the men that have inquired or applied to the program are in default of student loans. This default status excludes them from financial aid eligibility, therefore making it impossible for them to participate in the program. I have several more applicants that are on hold while they attempt to resolve their loan problems. I will continue my efforts to recruit eligible males so they can move forward with their educational goals. We believe the program is making a difference for disadvantaged and underserved families.

Thank you for your support. I can answer any questions you may have.