

Robt. WARD

Legislative and Executive Nominations

May 12, 2009

Good morning Senator Looney, Representative Janowski, and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee.

I am pleased to appear this morning before the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. I am honored to be nominated by Governor Rell to serve on the Board of Trustees of the University of Connecticut, and I thank her for this opportunity of public service.

I am confident that I can make a meaningful contribution as a member of the UCONN Board of Trustees.

I have always had an interest in education, including higher education. Back in 1985 I first served on the Education Committee and the following two terms served as ranking member. Although my legislative career moved in the leadership direction and off of the Education Committee, my interest in education issues never waned.

I have had a particularly keen interest in ensuring that our flagship state university be a pre-eminent public university. It has been and continues to be my

goal that if anyone is asked: What are the best public universities in the nation? The response should always include UConn along with the Michigan's and North Carolina's. We all want the best and brightest of our students to stay in Connecticut a first rate UCONN is essential to that goal.

As the minority leader in the House of Representatives, I often would hear about proposals, plans, legislation and other ideas to support UConn. The one that appealed to me most – the one I threw much of my own support behind – was the work of the UConn 2000 Task Force and subsequent legislation that came from its work. It has resulted in a significant upgrade of the UConn's facilities. Indeed the campus is almost unrecognizable for 1974 graduates like me. In building "world class facilities," it also sparked an unparalleled improvement in the quality of the education occurring in those facilities. What is most beneficial in this effort is the rallying of students, faculty, staff, alumni and many others who have no education or employment history with UConn. They are just simply members of the public that support our flagship university. Student enrollment is up, SAT scores are up, and I believe further growth in academic achievement and significant research can be achieved. I acknowledge the difficult fiscal crisis gripping our nation and certainly our beloved State of Connecticut. I ask this committee for its support in allowing me to play a role in helping UConn meet these challenges.

I also have a personal interest in UConn as I am an alumnus and the father of four children who are all graduates of the University of Connecticut. That experience has made them intellectually stronger and more aware of the world around them. Of course they enjoyed the same social atmosphere there that binds together all students in college, but I saw something else happen, too. Their courses, their professors, their independent work in the libraries and the other facilities UConn offers stretched their minds in so many different and varied ways. That UConn education is one of the chief contributing factors to their successes as young adults. On a lighter note I and members of my family are also die-hard UConn sports fans and I am proud of the way the success of UConn athletics helps to unite the people of Connecticut.

Once again, I am pleased and appreciative of Governor Rell's nomination of me to the UConn Board of Trustees and I look forward to serving with commitment and enthusiasm. I thank the Committee for its time this morning and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.