



Testimony by Dr. Louise Feroe
Connecticut State University System
Before the Higher Education and
Employment Advancement Committee
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Good morning, Senator Handley, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. For the record, I am Louise Feroe, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs for the Connecticut State University System (CSUS). Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today. We are grateful for your advocacy for higher education and the difference it can make, not only for our students but for our state.

I would like to comment briefly regarding House Bill 5025, *"An Act Concerning a Green Technology, Life Science and Health Information Technology Jobs Loan Forgiveness Program."* I applaud the Governor and members of the General Assembly for considering such a program. From the point of view of the Connecticut State University System, we have long been supportive of a loan forgiveness program like the one raised in this bill. A loan forgiveness program based on employment requirements – and commitments – in the State of Connecticut could be a very effective tool to incentivize the study of a shortage field, and to provide a well educated workforce for areas vital to the long-term well-being of the state.

The Connecticut State University System sees as its primary mission the education of Connecticut students and our state's future workforce. We are truly a catalyst for Connecticut. Eighty-six percent of our graduates remain in Connecticut after graduation to live and work. To encourage students to study and pursue a career in a workforce shortage area is a sound approach worthy of consideration as an economy building idea. It can be an effective strategic use of state funds to improve the economy of the state.

The Connecticut State University System believes that such loan forgiveness programs could act as incentives in other fields as well – most notably in the educating of highly qualified mathematics and science teachers in our education systems. Graduates highly qualified in mathematics and science that choose to teach in priority districts could be offered similar loan forgiveness as an incentive.

By carefully identifying eligible jobs and industries you want to support with a well educated workforce, beginning repayment only after two years of successful employment in the targeted field and spreading repayment over five years, you may help to ensure a well educated and stable workforce in an area which can support efforts to help the state economy rebound. Such a program could leverage state money to impact employment and could also be used to respond to teacher shortages in critical fields such as math and science, which could offer long-term education and economic benefits to our state

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.