



M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

Testimony of  
GOVERNOR M. JODI RELL

HB 5025: AAC a Green Technology, Life Science and Health Information Technology Jobs  
Loan Forgiveness Program

Senator Handley, Representative Willis and distinguished members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 5025, *An Act Concerning a Green Technology, Life Science and Health Information Technology Jobs Loan Forgiveness Program*.

House Bill 5025 establishes a loan forgiveness program for students who receive a bachelor's or associate's degree in a green technology field, life science or health information technology from an institution of higher education in Connecticut and who are employed in this state in such field for at least two years following graduation. Qualifying individuals who graduate with a bachelor's degree will be eligible for loan forgiveness of up to \$2,500 per year for up to four years and qualifying individuals with an associate's degree will be eligible for loan forgiveness of up to \$2,500 per year for up to two years.

The bill provides \$6 million to fund the loan forgiveness program. Three million dollars will come from the conservation and load management charge paid by electricity consumers and \$3 million will be transferred from the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority.

As you know, in order to preserve our natural resources and protect our environment, we have increasingly embraced green technology – a field we also expect to be at the center of Connecticut's economic growth in the future. In the past year I have issued an Executive Order creating a Green Collar Jobs Council to identify green collar job opportunities in our State and ensure that training is available so that we will be able to provide skilled workers to fill these positions.

The loan forgiveness program established in House Bill 5025 will ensure that more of our young people are able to take advantage of the educational opportunities that will allow them to qualify for these green jobs. This bill also will increase the likelihood that, once trained, these students will stay in Connecticut, not only in green technologies but in other crucial fields such as the life sciences – industries dealing with the structure and behavior of living organisms – and health information technology. The program is critical to helping Connecticut embrace – and remain competitive in – the future.

We are recognized around the nation for the high quality and talent of our work force. The best and brightest are found right here. We cannot afford to allow that reputation to slip, any more

than we can afford to lose our treasured young people and the enduring promise they represent to opportunities elsewhere.

I strongly urge you to report House Bill 5025 out of committee as soon as possible. Let's start realizing our future today!

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal.