

Testimony: Paige Armstrong, Third Year Medical Student

HB5027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER'S FACILITIES PLAN

Senator Handley, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, my name is Paige Armstrong and I am a Third Year Medical Student at the University of Connecticut. I am here today to speak in support of **HB5027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER'S FACILITIES PLAN.**

The current proposal will benefit the Schools of Dental Medicine, Medicine, and the Graduate School in Bio-medical Sciences, the State of Connecticut, and the present and future patients of John Dempsey Hospital. Currently the Health Center houses three professional schools, many hospital beds, patient care facilities, and research laboratories. However, due to the size and dated facilities, students and patients must rely heavily upon additional resources in the greater Hartford and surrounding areas. This proposal would lead to the creation of a modern Integrated Academic Facility. Such an inclusive entity will be capable of fostering mentorship between faculty members and students in a University setting. It will also allow for enhanced research opportunities to improve clinical outcomes. The imminent result would be that of elevating the professional schools to a nationally renowned level. In addition to the benefits of an expanded hospital, the Network Initiatives will provide improved care to members of the community and state. Particularly, the proposed Regional Primary Care Institute and the Health Disparities Institute will provide additional resources to members of the community. They will also enhance student and resident education by offering additional facilities in which to train in primary care.

Before attending the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, I completed my Master of Health Science in Public Health at Johns Hopkins University. I am currently a member of the Urban Service Track, an organization that fosters students interested in research and volunteerism aimed to promote health in urban underserved communities. I have also been involved in the development and implementation of two educational programs, one in Costa Rica and one involving Medical Students. Additionally, many of my third year clerkships have taken place at John Dempsey Hospital. Given my interests and familiarity with the University of Connecticut Health Center, I can comfortably say that a University-based Hospital can provide students with uniquely beneficial experience. During my rotations, I am able to work closely with faculty members in each specialty. Attending physicians are exceedingly approachable and, due to the fact that faculty members are intimately involved in the curriculum, they are familiar with the expectations of medical students. I also find faculty members at John Dempsey Hospital to be invested in the education and the development of future health care professionals. John Dempsey Hospital provides an epicenter of education and mentoring that students can utilize; however, the interwoven community of additional healthcare delivery facilities affords students exposure in a variety of settings. I found John Dempsey Hospital to be critical in my training of the fundamentals of medicine through close mentorship with faculty members. It was also critical in the development of my clinical skills. With the support and training I received at the University-based Hospital, I was able to pursue my personal interest of volunteering in community clinics and working with underserved urban populations. The support of HB5027 will provide students with a superior education, which in turn will produce well-trained future scientists and health care professionals capable of providing Connecticut residents with high-quality comprehensive care.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to speak and I strongly urge you to support the advancement of the University of Connecticut Health Center and HB5027.