WESTERN
CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
JAMES W. SCHMOTTER, PH.D.

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Good morning, Senator Handley, Representative Willis and members of the committee. I am James Schmotter, President of Western Connecticut State University, and I'm here to speak in support of House Bill 5024, which would enable the Connecticut State University System to offer a doctoral program in nursing education.

Others will speak in more detail about the need for this program and its structure. I want to make some observations about how planning for this program has evolved on our campus. As Provost Linda Rinker will tell you, my initial response to any proposed new academic program is skepticism and a lot of questions. My 30 years in higher education have taught me that we in academe are much better at starting things than we are at stopping them, and often this has not worked to the best interests of our stakeholders. I brought such an attitude of skepticism to our doctoral program in instructional leadership, which I'm pleased to say has exceeded all expectations, and I did the same with the endeavor we are discussing today.

Having said that, I am convinced that this program is academically sound, realistically achievable even in these challenging times, and a model of how CSUS institutions can collaborate to serve important workforce needs in our state.

Because of the close coordination of the provosts, deans of graduate studies, and (especially) nursing faculty at Southern and Western, a high quality program based on the nationally recognized Ed.D at Teachers College, Columbia University, has been built. I spent a year in a different program at Teachers College, and I can attest to the quality of what goes on there. It is a good institution against which to benchmark.

Through collaboration, careful reallocation of resources on our campuses, and federal funding for its start-up, this program will be delivered efficiently and effectively. The important continuing job of preparing BSN and MSN graduates to meet one of Connecticut's most critical workplace needs will not be jeopardized. Indeed, the very purpose of this program is to address the faculty shortage that is an important element of that need.

This Ed.D. in Nursing Education also demonstrates how CSUS universities can work together to serve our students and the state without the costs and inefficiencies of program duplication. We at Western have realized the benefits of such collaboration in one track of our Ed.D. in Instructional leadership through a partnership with our colleagues at Central. This collaborative effort in nursing education will, I believe, be even more productive.

In short, I can assure you that this program has been carefully vetted and makes sense—for CSUS, for our prospective students, and—most of all—for Connecticut.

Thank you.

181 WHITE STREET, DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810 WWW.WCSU.EDU