

Testimony
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

March 15, 2010

**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 Bruce Liang. I am here today to speak in support of **HB5027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER'S FACILITIES PLAN.**

Currently, I am the Ray Neag Distinguished Professor and Director of the Pat and Jim Calhoun Cardiology Center. I received my MD degree from Harvard Medical School. I moved from University of Pennsylvania to University of Connecticut in 2002 to assume my current position because of UConn's vision of an integrated medical center. Having served at 3 university hospitals (Brigham and Women's, University of Pennsylvania and University of Connecticut hospitals), I am convinced that a university hospital needs to have an updated physical plant with enough space to attract the diversity of talents to train the next generation of physicians and surgeons. It is a class room for these future care providers. It is a place where new biomedical knowledge can not only be discovered but also be applied to the benefit of patients. It is a place that permits not only bench to bedside translational research but also a reverse bedside to bench type of study. The latter will require close geographic proximity for patient samples to be studied without delay. Through this kind of bedside-to-bench study, we have identified a potentially new way to treat irregularity of the heart beat, and have developed a new blood test for heart attack and heart failure. Some of these discoveries are being followed closely or used by the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries as new targets to treat heart disease. They also enable us to attract grant funding to UConn and the region.

The clinical and research activities provide a unique opportunity to teach our medical students and residents. Without an integrated medical center where the hospital is physically next to the school of medicine, such an opportunity would not exist. Some of the training could not have been offered for Connecticut programs such as the open heart and angioplasty programs at Waterbury and St. Mary Hospitals. As you know, we have been a past and a current supporter of the Waterbury programs in the last 6 years. An integrated medical center can deliver top quality clinical care through cutting edge research, through evidence-based practice of medicine, and through being a role model and a teacher to the next generation of doctors. UConn's vision of a medical school integrated with an academic hospital is and shall remain the key to providing the best medical care in the world, and for sure, in the state of Connecticut as well.

I am thankful to the support by UConn Health Center and the State of Connecticut in the last 8 years. I have been fortunate to be elected America's top doctor for the last five years, since 2006, and a member of the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering. My personal experiences have taught me the importance of a medical school contiguous with a university hospital.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you and I hope that you will support the new clinical facility for John Dempsey Hospital as an updated university hospital for UConn under the current bill.