



State of Connecticut
Department of Higher Education

**Testimony by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education
Before the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
10:30 a.m. – LOB 2C
March 4, 2010**

House Bill 5368 (Raised) An Act Concerning No Worker Left Behind

The Department is very supportive of tuition assistance for unemployed individuals who wish to pursue their education in high demand fields. Similar tuition waivers are in place in a number of public higher education institutions around the country. We are aware of such programs at the Community College of Rhode Island, all public colleges and universities in New Jersey, and a number of community colleges in Pennsylvania (which are individually governed so there is no statewide policy).

In some colleges, the tuition waiver is on a “space available” basis only. Some states also direct potential applicants to work with their Labor Department “one stop” centers to demonstrate eligibility.

We would caution the committee to make sure the program does not shift the cost for the tuition waiver onto other students. Any implementation of such a benefit should be as streamlined as possible and should utilize the capability of other state agencies to verify the qualifying status of the unemployed Connecticut resident.

I would also refer the committee to section 7 which directs the Board of Governors to waive tuition for certain programs or occupational certificates. The Board of Governors does not collect tuition, the statute would have to require public constituent units to follow tuition waiver policy set by the Board pursuant to this legislation.

We look forward to a continuing dialogue on the details of this legislation.