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**Written Testimony for the Program Review & Investigations Committee
By
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On behalf of the member institutions of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), I am submitting testimony regarding two bills that are currently before the Committee.

Raised Bill 5165, AAC High School Graduation Requirements. This bill would enhance high school graduation requirements in an effort to ensure that high school graduates are college and career ready. We support changes in Connecticut's high school graduation requirements.

Across the country, state are grappling with students who do not perform well in high school, students who enter college in need of serious remediation in core areas and/or students who are not able to matriculate to college due to poor K-12 preparation. Connecticut faces similar problems, particularly in our urban schools.

Because our sole natural resource is our well-educated citizenry and because our population in Connecticut is not expected to grow in the coming years, we must be deliberate in how we address the preparation gap. We must set high standards for our students, their schools and families and provide the tools necessary for success. As noted in *Education Week in 2007*, "A deep pool of research suggests that students' chances of making it to college, and succeeding there, increase significantly if they take challenging high school courses."

Other states have been bold in their responses to this challenge. Texas has enacted a law that makes a college-prep curriculum the default for all high school students. This has pushed change down to the middle and elementary levels. Arkansas has developed the "Smart Core" default college-prep curriculum. Indiana, which has a recommended college-prep curriculum, is considering making this the default curriculum and tying it to admission at state four-year institutions. Connecticut, known for its highly educated workforce, should not lag behind other states.

***Raised Bill 5349 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE
CONCERNING A STRATEGIC PLAN AND COORDINATION FOR
ALIGNMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND
EMPLOYMENT.***

This bill mandates the development of a strategic master plan for higher education in Connecticut. We support this bill and think it is important that Connecticut consider how to make the most of its wealth of excellent colleges and universities. Careful planning with an eye towards enhanced partnerships with the K-12 system and employers will serve the state well.