

**Written Testimony**

**Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee Public Hearing**

**March 10, 2011**

Thank you for the opportunity to share my observations and concerns regarding Governor Malloy's Bill Number 1011 referred to the Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement.

My name is Gene Mazur. I live in Manchester, CT with my wife, Barbara, a retired Speech Therapist with the Board of Education, Town of East Hartford. We have lived and worked in Connecticut for about forty years. I received my MBA from the University of Connecticut. Our three children attended public primary and secondary schools in this state. All three children also utilized the Community College system as a portion of their higher education. One of them received a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Connecticut at Storrs. Two of them are members of the Connecticut workforce and one is a part-time English professor at both UConn and Manchester Community College (MCC). I have been affiliated with the MCC Foundation Board for the last 12 years, raising private funds for student scholarships and programs.

I am supportive of the Governor's goals of budget balancing, shared sacrifice and shared responsibility.

With respect to the Act Concerning a Reorganization of the Connecticut's System of Public Higher Education, I have the following concerns:

- A restructuring to a single Board of Regents for Higher Education was recommended without discussion with the affected parties
- The bill does not mention the expected savings as a result of the restructuring
- The bill is not consistent with the proposed budget cuts. And the budget cuts are not consistent with the enrollment growth experienced in the Community College system or with the growing needs of the State to have a trained workforce
- The restructuring is modeled after the Minnesota system without mention a "best practices" analysis of other state models with emphasis on mission and effectiveness of the models

Given a directive from the Governor to reduce expenses and improve higher education effectiveness, I believe that the Committee on Higher Education, The Connecticut State University board, the Connecticut Community College board, Charter Oak State College and the Board of Governors for Higher Education and the University of Connecticut with the help of independent consulting resources, I believe the group could present a model for change that would be superior to the existing Bill proposed and be completed by the beginning of the Fall 2011 semester.

The result of such a joint project for higher education could possibly result in a consolidation of central offices, but would undoubtedly provide a better solution giving consideration to:

- Balancing short-term needs with long-term goals
- Separate and distinct missions of the State College System, Community Colleges, The State University and Charter Oak State College
- Separate measures of success based on the differing roles of the four-year and two-year institutions
- Appropriate shared administration and administrative systems
- Input from students at the different types of higher education institutions

- Concerns about access to courses, tuition and fee increases and class offerings
- Evaluation of results from existing partnerships with local high schools and local businesses
- Ability to raise private funds for student scholarships and programs when the state isn't contributing as much (or meeting their obligations to the match for endowments)
- Need for successful certification workforce programs that do not fall into the four-year or two-year college models
- Improved balance between full- and part-time teachers utilizing today's technology to the benefit of our student population
- Role of higher education in job creation and capital resource development

The joint higher ed project should have a leader who is responsible for the completion of the needs analysis, alternative evaluation, proposed measures of success and, of utmost importance, a realistic implementation timetable.

In conclusion, I repeat my gratitude for the committee's willingness to listen to, and attempt to understand the differing suggestions for effective change in our institutions of higher learning for the betterment of our existing and future students as well as our existing and future workforce needs in the State of Connecticut.

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Manchester, CT  
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