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February 28, 2011

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Debby Blackmer and I have lived at 570 Route 197 in Woodstock, CT with my husband raising our children for the last 23 years. I am requesting that you vote against any budgetary cuts that will affect the function, viability and effectiveness of the education provided by Community Colleges of Connecticut. I have been a very fortunate beneficiary of such outstanding and affordable education. I was able to take advantage of the Certified Nursing Assistant program offered by Quinnebaug Valley Community College in Danielson, in 2005 and obtain a job at Day Kimball Hospital as a Unit Receptionist/Patient Care Tech at the age of 38. In 2007, I was able to start a course of studies at QVCC in order to pursue the qualifications required to transfer to an Associates Registered Nursing Program at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich. While at QVCC, I was inducted into the Honor Society, Phi Theta Kappa while successfully completing the required Sciences (Biology, Microbiology, Chemistry, Anatomy & Physiology I and II) along with the required Algebra, English, Humanities, Psychology and Sociology courses required to be accepted into an Associates RN program. I was accepted into TRCC and started their program in September of 2010 at the age of 43. I am now in my second semester at TRCC with plans to graduate Spring 2012 with anticipation to transfer into a bachelor program.

Without the affordability of the programs provided by both these community colleges I would not have been able to pursue such a career advancement path, especially in the tough economic times we have been facing while raising a family. These colleges have worked together to provide such an affordable, valuable and successful program that has allowed so many people, like myself, to move forward to provide our community with benefits that reach far beyond personal and economic growth. In order for our state to move in a direction to prosper, we must not destroy the opportunities that our advanced educational system affords so many people, young and old, to develop an educational career course. Again, I ask that you vote against any action that will hinder the affordability and viability of courses or programs that

our community colleges provide. I believe these colleges and programs are the reason many of us have survived these difficult times. Thank you.

Debby Blackmer

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