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To whom it may concern,

It has been brought to my attention that a budget cut is being considered by the state this coming Monday that will affect the Connecticut Community College system. I implore you not to make any budget cuts to the Community College system. Such cuts will prolong the increasing unemployment rates and will have a devastating effect on the states economy for generations to come.

With unemployment rates over 11% many people are turning to our Community College system for help in finding new careers. The Community Colleges have been offering an affordable way to achieve a higher education for decades and any budget cuts to this delicate system will lead to fewer programs and courses resulting in lower attendance rates. A great majority of people who will be affected by budget cuts are those who are not able to afford to get a higher education anywhere else, people that if forced to pay higher rates will not be able to obtain an appropriate education.

I have been a self-employed contractor in the state of Connecticut for over 10 years. However on May 25, 2009 I was hospitalized with a severe condition that put me within minutes from death. After being released from the hospital I was unable to function on my own which resulted in the loss of my business. I found myself faced with no way of making a living. With medical bills piling up and doctors telling me that I could no longer be in the construction industry I turned to the local Community College in my area for seeking a higher education, in hopes it would lead to a prosperous future.

Since attending Northwestern Connecticut Community College I have majored in Environmental Science and Natural Resources, and I had the pleasure of interacting with some of the most helpful people I have ever met, people who care about the future of all their students, people who put others' interests before their own. My experience with Connecticut's Community Colleges has had an enormous impact on my life and lives of the people around me. I myself have already received offers of employment in the field of Environmental Science even before I have finished my degree.

It is important not to exclude any part of society from higher education. In 1765, John Adams, in the Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law said, "The preservation of the means of knowledge among the lowest ranks is of more importance to the public than all the property of all the rich men in the country". Just as in 1765, an educated society is a priceless commodity that enables prosperity of a nation. Today in order to have an educated society the people must have access to affordable education such as Community Colleges.

As a successful business man I understand the decision making process when looking at budget spreadsheets, and admit that many of these decisions can be difficult to make. But I can assure you that ramifications of budget cuts to the Connecticut Community Colleges will be severe, prolonging the increasing unemployment rates and devastating the state's economy for generations to come.

Respectfully yours,

John J Papp