

Good evening, Senator Harp, Representative Walker, Sen. Maynard, Rep. Willis, and members of the Committee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Gilbert Gigliotti, I am a professor of English and Latin at Central Connecticut State University. I'm the former chairman of the English Department (one of the two largest departments on campus) and the most recent recipient of the CCSU Distinguished Service Award for my work with the campus radio station, Media Board, Inter-Residence Council, and Student Union Board of Governors, among other organizations, as well as the producer of the television show *Central Authors* and organizer of the Alumni Association's "Classic Friday Film Series."

I list these activities – as opposed to my academic achievements or publications – to illustrate the various ways in which I have interacted closely with the students and the CCSU community since coming to Connecticut in 1992 as an assistant professor. I do this because I am here testifying this evening on behalf of the students of CCSU, who are the future of Connecticut.

If I had to summarize the CCSU student population in a word, I would call them tenacious for their ability to adapt to circumstances often beyond their control. Semester after semester, I am amazed at their ability to do what needs to be done – thanks to a bad economy, or family matters, or medical emergencies or...well, the list goes on and on. These tenacious students, however, do not quit and go home; they, not infrequently, may switch from full-time status to part-time or take classes at a community college closer to home, or leave the residence halls and return home to save money, or some other fairly extreme solution – any of which makes it difficult to engage in the University the way we know can change their lives for the better and help them develop into engaged and productive citizens of Connecticut.

I know that you know that the vast majority of CSU students come from and stay in Connecticut. I know that you know that a university degree means the skills and knowledge which translate into higher salaries for those who earn a degree. And I know you know that cutting the budget of the four CSU Universities will try these tenacious students even more than they have ever been tried before.

What I fear is that, when our tenacious students are hit, not only with higher gas taxes and sales taxes and income taxes, to mention but a few, but also with cuts at CCSU that will result in larger classes, fewer course offerings, fewer student services, and a longer road to graduation, their tenacity may turn to frustration and their frustration to resignation, and their resignation to incompleteness...the incompleteness of their degree, the incompleteness of their growth and their potential, the incompleteness of their full participation in the future of Connecticut.

There are many ways to balance the budget. Please don't do it on the backs of the students of CSU...the future of Connecticut depends upon your decision.

