

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing
Monday, February 28, 2010
Testimony Submitted by Cassandra Parkman
Goodwin College Student

Chairs and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here tonight. My name is Cassandra Parkman and I am testifying here tonight because of my concern for the proposed cuts to the CICS Grant Program.

Part of any student's decision to go to college is whether they have the finances to do so. For many of us, we often need that extra financial help to achieve our goals, I know I did, and still do. So when I hear that the government is trying to take away part of that help it chills me to the core.

Growing up I always knew that I had a great future ahead of me, but I never saw the path that would lead me in that direction. I always heard of scholarships, grants and financial aid, but I never really felt like it was something that was available to me, so I didn't put much effort into my academic success, and became a high school drop out at the age of 16, but eventually earned my G.E.D. When the economy took a turn for the worse, I found myself in the unemployment line, wondering what was next for me. I started seeing all these commercials for colleges advertising their programs and it sounded like a good idea. I made some calls and met with admissions, discussed my options. But the whole time I had this nagging fear in the back of my head; how was I going to pay for this?

After deciding my major, I was introduced to financial aid and it was all explained to me. Because of my financial situation and my status as an independent student, I was not only eligible for a Pell Grant; I was also eligible for \$3,275 a year from the CT Independent Student Grant Program. This was the deciding factor of whether or not I was actually going to attend college.

Currently, I am a student at Goodwin College, earning my Associates degree in Human Services. With only three semesters left, losing any amount of money would be devastating, I could possibly mean the difference between staying enrolled in college, and being financially forced to drop out again. There are over 3,000 students in the state of Connecticut that currently receive aid from this Grant, and while I can't speak for all of them, I can speak for myself and the people who are going to soon be making the decision of whether or not to go to college based on whether or not they can afford it. Taking away much needed educational funding is not the right way to go.

On Thursday, February 24 2011, Governor Malloy won approval for more the \$250,000 to improve Connecticut's railways and highway systems, and plans to buy 38 new rail cars for Metro-North. What does it say about a state that is in a deficit and wants to cut much needed educational grant money, but we can improve our trains and highways? Where are our priorities?

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