

Senator Toni Harp  
Appropriations Committee Co-Chair  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

March 23, 2011

Dear Senator Toni Harp,

My name is Jessica Fairchild and I am a junior in the Wamogo Regional High School agriscience program in Litchfield. I live in Northfield and I attend this regional agriscience school of choice program because I want to expand my knowledge about all animals. I have grown up with animals all of my life, living at a boarding stable, Deerwood Stables. I did not come here just for my love of horses, I came to further my knowledge of all animals. From livestock, to aquaculture, to small animal I enjoy learning all that I can. This awareness is gained in ways that my old high school could not offer; there are so many hands-on experiences that I could not get anywhere else. I applied to Wamogo because I knew how much agricultural education could provide for me, but I never thought it could get me this far. It even opened my eyes to what I have already. I have my SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience) as a placement working for my parents and working with my own horses. I had no idea how many hours I spend down there and with photos and skills learned I can see my progress through training more clearly. The National FFA Organization has shown me leadership and hard work, also going out to help your community and how to educate others. My SAE has shown me how I am achieving myself. Without this agriscience program I would not be nearly as knowledgeable as I am today.

In the state of Connecticut there are 400,000 acres of land being used for 4,900 farms. That's almost 5,000 organized farms, each with a different purpose. With what the agriscience program teaches, you could learn how to become part of Connecticut Agriculture, having the potential to own you own business or farm. Within parts of this land there are 102,000 tons of just bales of hay alone every year. I use hundreds of bales every few months for just under 10 horses. This is one example of agriculture that has many purposes and is helping many other businesses.

I bring this to your attention and expressing how much just this one school has to offer for me personally, and to try to encourage you to please urge the Appropriations Committee to pledge 9 million dollars of the school choice funding increases proposed in the Governor's budget to the state's 19 regional vo-ag agriscience programs. Our agriscience programs have been drastically underfunded for over 20 years as compared to the magnet schools, chapter schools, vocational technical schools, and other schools choice funding programs. This wil allow hundreds of more students like me to enroll in these successful programs so they will have the same opportunity to learn and have these hands-on livechanging experiences that I have the privilege to attend.

Thank you for your time, I appreciate you looking at this important matter.

Sincerely,

  
Jessica Fairchild