

Testimony for Charter Oak State College-

By Tara M. Keating

Appropriations Committee – Public Hearing

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Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name Tara Keating and I reside in Haddam, Connecticut. I am honored to be here today to speak about the importance of Charter Oak State College to the State of Connecticut.

I am 38 years old, divorced, and have three school age children. I attend Charter Oak State College half-time, happily work full-time for an Authority of the State here in Hartford, and I volunteer for the Waterbury Police Department as a bagpiper.

As cliché as it may sound, I moved to Connecticut 8 years ago from New York with a dream to get a great job, buy a house, and put my children into excellent schools. My dreams came true, all of those things happened, and in my mind, I was finally a full-fledged adult, but there was still something haunting me. It was my father's words, his strong Irish Brogue saying "Tara, you need to go to college, you will need that degree for your future." As a teen I balked at him- saying to myself "what does he know, he only went through the eighth grade."

One day, many years later I realized he was right. I was sitting at my desk at work, my boss came over sat down, and informed me that they wanted to promote me, but could not- because I lacked a Bachelor's degree. This news was disappointing and stung me deeply. My boss suggested Charter Oak State College, she said they could help.

From the moment Charter Oak answered their phone I felt at ease, welcome, inspired and renewed. Charter Oak State College understood my unique financial situation and my schedule which included planning around work; my daughters swim meets, and my two son's t-ball games. The college made what seemed 'impossible' possible. Was there actually a college that could help me? The answer was yes, Connecticut itself had a college which offered me a brighter future.

I am very pleased to say that as of today, I am currently four classes away from my Bachelor's degree in Political Science, and I cannot wait for my father to see me walk across that stage.

Because of Charter Oak State College, I have confidence for the future and I am no longer stuck, no longer wondering if I should move back to New York. Charter Oak has inspired me to invest in the State of Connecticut in any way I can. My future is in Connecticut because of Charter Oak. This is more than college; it is hope for real adult residents of the State- like me, who have a dream.

Thank you.