

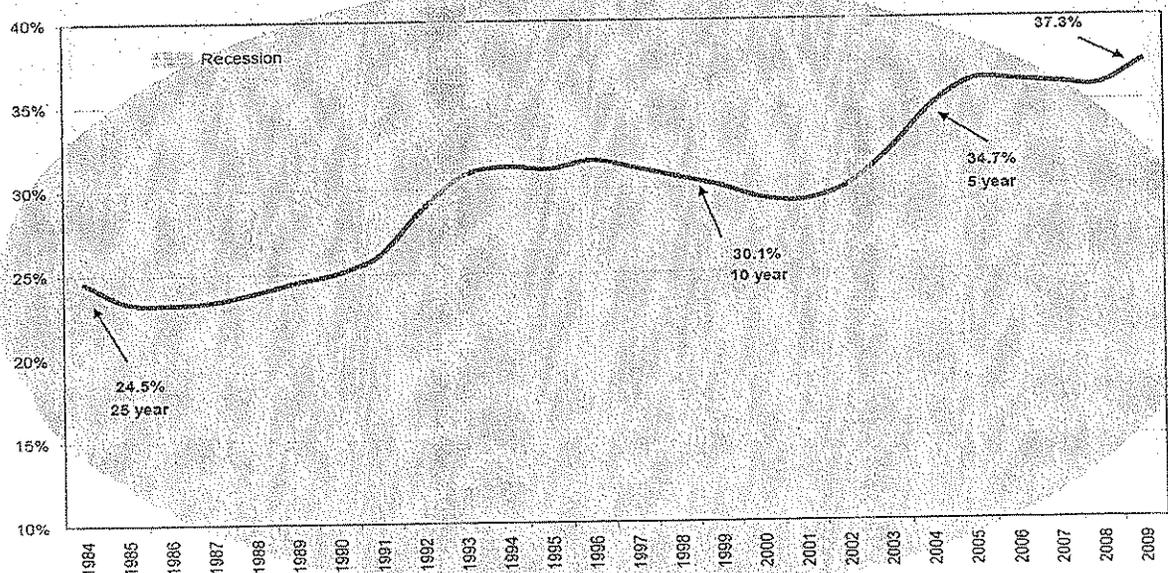
Ladies and gentlemen my name is Dave Ferreira and I want to thank you for letting me speak at this very important hearing. I understand times are tough and I do not envy the hard decisions you will have to make in this budget cycle but I implore you to preserve the investment that is higher education in Connecticut.

As you can see from the chart below that is located at the bottom of my written testimony, over the past 25 years students have been asked to contribute more towards the cost of public higher education. Students today are graduating with more debt which leads to a greater portion of their salary going towards debt obligations and interest rather than back into our economy. They have already been sharing in the sacrifice and we should not expect them to share more.

At the community colleges we have already been doing more with less. At Three Rivers, enrollment has grown 45% over the past five years. This growth in enrollment has not only meant an increase in the number of teachers, but an increase in services. During this same period of time, tutoring appointments have gone up 54%. We have learned to work smarter with our current resources by updating our scheduling system and refining our assessments to increase utilization rates. We have learned to work smarter but now we are at a period of time where any further decrease in resources will put quality and the underlying ability to meet student and societal needs at risk.

Our Governor has said that "Connecticut is open for business". To mean what we say we need to show businesses we develop our workforce. Our future depends on educating many more Connecticut citizens to a higher level of knowledge and skill than required in the 20th century. This cannot be achieved without sustained and growing state support for higher education. Thank you.

Figure 4
 Net Tuition as a Percent of Public Higher Education Total Educational Revenue,
 U.S., Fiscal 1984-2009



Note: Net tuition revenue used for capital debt service is included in net tuition revenue, but excluded from total educational revenue in calculating the above figures.

Source: SSDB