

Dear Government Officials,

It has come to my attention that there have been talks about cutting the CICS Funding. However, it is important for you to realize that cutting this funding is the same as cutting the prosperous future that lays ahead many bright young individuals. When I moved to CT almost a year ago, one thing that I knew I could look forward to was an affordable education. In a country where success in higher education gives individuals a competitive advantage in the job market the government should optimize rather than decrease this opportunity. In a time where the accessibility of education is taken for granted, students that are hard working but in financial need deserve for the government to be a support system and not an obstacle.

This past year I was awarded a total of \$11000 in grants, loans, and scholarships to attend a school that costs \$26000. In order to come up with the difference I have worked three jobs, maintained an over 3.8 GPA and had the help of my family. Now my sister is ready for college and I'm not exactly sure how I'm going to be able to afford school this year but I do know that a reduction in any current funding would greatly harm my chances of being able to afford to continue my studies. I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you for the aid that you have awarded me for the past year and ask that you do reconsider any thoughts of cutting the CICS Fund. I am just one voice among many that appreciate and depend on this fund. Thank You.

-Mariah Dookie, University of Bridgeport '13