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Good evening, Senator Harp, Representative Walker, Sen. Maynard, Rep. Willis, and members of the Committee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before you today. Tonight, I would like to give you an insight into what Southern Connecticut State University has done for me. For a moment, I would like to be frank: SCSU was not my first choice school. I was, for lack of a better word, tricked by my parents to attend Southern. My mother simply couldn't bear to have me go so far away to the forty-five thousand dollar a year private school that I had been accepted to. So my parents told me that if I went to Southern for the first two years, I could save some money and then transfer to wherever I'd like. Five years later, I'm still at SCSU. I am currently a fifth year senior majoring in English Education and I have a minor in theatre and I will be graduating this May.

In late August of 2006, I was dropped off to my residence hall bitter and angry. One week later, I was rushing a sorority, auditioning for the upcoming musical, and falling in love with SCSU. Throughout my time at Southern, I became a sister of Kappa Delta Xi sorority, joined several other clubs and organizations, founded the Book Marks English club, helped found two national honor societies, and regularly acted in theatrical productions on campus. These extra-curriculars gave me an education that no academic class could ever teach me, and that lesson was about character. The opportunities that Southern gave me through these activities taught me to put others before myself, how to be a figure of authority, how to make difficult decisions for the betterment of a group, and how to stay calm under pressure. I learned how to make an idea or event actually occur, how to never take no for a final answer, how to give my word and stick to it, and perhaps most importantly, I acquired excellent time management skills.

At Southern, I have always kept in mind that I am a student and a student first. Throughout my years at Southern I received a well-rounded instruction through general education courses: I was able to take classes ranging from geology to Italian and American history to art history. In my actual major, I received a first-class education from the English department. Perhaps one of my favorite things about SCSU is the English department and the education I received from there. As an English student at SCSU, I was never just another number. I was a student who, along with my peers, received individualized attention in all of our courses. Our professors made it their business to know who we were not just on an academic level, but on an individualized level as well. Our professors made sure to be available for questions or discussions not only about our classes, but also to give life-advice, which, let's be honest, all college students are desperately seeking. On a personal level, I received more support for my own personal endeavors from the English department than I received from my own family. From the individualized relationships that were built between my peers and our department, our professors pushed us to be the best students that we could be and never accepted anything less, and for this I am grateful.

Senators, Representatives and members of the committee, Southern Connecticut State University made me the person that I am today and I feel truly blessed. I feel that from my education that I received and the character development that I had undergone, I am a well-informed and open-minded young adult with the confidence to pursue and achieve my goals. Southern Connecticut State University was not my first choice school, but I believe everything happens for a reason and Southern was clearly where I was meant to be.

