Public Hearing – Monday, March 4, 2013
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

Testimony Submitted by Alicia Echevarria
Presented by Alicia Echevarria

S.B. No. 840 - An Act Concerning Next Generation Connecticut

My name is Alicia Echevarria, and I am a second year Masters student in Civil Engineering at the University of Connecticut. I have had a somewhat unique experience at UConn by enrolling in one of the unique courses that the school of engineering has to offer. The Experiential Entrepreneurship for Engineers course has expanded my vision of opportunities for engineers in the world. Through the class, I have co-invented and patented an innovative product in addition to co-founding a start-up company based around this product. All of this has taken place while simultaneously conducting the research for my Master's thesis program.

Bridging the gap between STEM research and the adoption of innovation in society is much more difficult than simply sending newly graduated students into the workforce. While STEM students are the key to resurrecting a thriving economy, programs that not only teach students in their discipline but also in how to adapt that discipline to benefit society are vital for STEM students' success. The Next Generation Connecticut Initiative will improve the quality and quantity of these types of courses at UConn making them widely available to many students across many disciplines.

I envision Next Generation Connecticut as a powerful flagship initiative that will restructure Connecticut's economy and spur an economic growth that is recognized by many other states. After Connecticut has blazed the trail with this initiative, I see many other states following in our footsteps in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

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