



University of Connecticut
School of Engineering

Center for Clean Energy
Engineering

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Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Testimony Submitted by Dr. Radenka Maric

Presented by Dr. Radenka Maric

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

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding S.B. 840 - An Act Concerning Next Generation Connecticut. As a professor of Materials Science & Engineering at the University of Connecticut, I welcome the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

My primary message today is: It is important to build and protect Connecticut's long-term competitiveness. As Connecticut's only comprehensive research, land-, sea- and space-grant university, we have an essential role to play in developing human capital, creating innovation and sharing knowledge in support of our business, and industry, our families and communities.

For more than 140 years, we've delivered on our mission of education, research and outreach and I believe never more effectively than we do today.

For example, each year we welcome nearly new 3,000 undergraduate students. Our current enrollment across the university's campuses stands at 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

In recent years, record numbers of applications from high caliber students and support programs ensuring student success resulted in UConn's increase in national ranking from #38 to 21 among public universities, according to U.S. News & World Report's national college ranking.

Today, 93% students continue after their first year. This retention rate is among the best for public university in the nation.

Undergraduate STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) enrollment increased by 115% since 1996.

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The university degrees awarded per year increases by 75%.

Many of these students, regardless of where they come from, choose to stay and live in Connecticut, work in Connecticut and raise their families.

UConn educates a full 60% of Connecticut's advanced health-care professionals, without whom communities and cities would be seriously underserved.

In 2012, UConn garnered over \$225,000,000 in external research funding, creating thousands of jobs statewide. Since 2000 the university's portfolio has grown by 40 percent, significantly outperforming our peer institutions.

Research funding and private support are designated for specific purposes and cannot be used for day-to-day operation, or the core infrastructure.

Our goal under Next Generation Connecticut is to enroll an additional 6,580 talented undergraduate students, construct new STEM technology laboratories, hire 259 new faculty (200 STEM), and upgrade aging infrastructure to accommodate new faculty and students.

Time and time again, we hear from Connecticut business leader they would not be here in Connecticut without the University of Connecticut.

This historic proposed investment will enable UConn to dramatically increase its contributions to the state's economy through new ideas, new products, new industries and new jobs. UConn has delivered, and will continue to deliver, its public mission and is vital to Connecticut's competitiveness in the global economy.

In closing, I want to say it takes time to build an institution of this caliber capable of attracting talent, significant outside funding, and new companies to Connecticut. If such greatness is lost, and such extraordinary productivity is compromised, it's nearly impossible to rebuild our state.

Respectfully,



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