



PEDRO E. SEGARRA
MAYOR

**Testimony by Mayor Pedro E. Segarra
City of Hartford
Senate Bill 840**

**An Act Concerning Next Generation Connecticut
March 4, 2013 at 10:30AM in Hearing Room 2E**

Co-Chairs Fonfara and Wildlitz, Vice-Chairs LeBeau and Lamar, Ranking Members Frantz and Williams, and distinguished members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for the special opportunity to present written remarks in support of the University of Connecticut's Next Generation proposal. Unfortunately I am not available to present my testimony in person as I have a previous commitment with two of the bond rating agencies. Nonetheless, I feel it particularly important to share with you the many positive benefits that would be observed by the relocation of UConn's West Hartford branch to Downtown Hartford.

Many today will share numbers, facts and figures about the importance of this proposal, furthering the aims of STEM education and how Connecticut should and must be a leader in the global marketplace. As a municipal leader that supports education reform and who's community was one of three in the entire country that received an Economic Development Administration grant of \$1 million dollars to create a business incubator, it is clear to me that our future – and that our success – is most predicated on our ability to exist at the cutting edge of research and technology. For that one reason alone this proposal is worthy on the merits and should move forward.

However, there is a much larger component to this proposal that needs to be considered and how, in particular, it will shape the direction of the State of Connecticut over the next two to three decades. While there is no empirical evidence that I've seen that proves the adage of "as Hartford goes, so does the State", there is enough data to speculate that it is indeed true. Part of the UConn Next Generation proposal includes \$70 million dollars to relocate the West Hartford branch to Downtown Hartford – a move that I have supported and advocated on behalf of dating back to when I first took office in 2010. Early in 2011 many of you are aware that I launched a campaign to relocate the UConn School of Medicine to Hartford; for many reasons that did not happen, but I refused to accept that a larger downtown presence by UConn wasn't warranted or in the best interest of the region and the state.

Coupled with the great success that St. Joseph's has had locating its pharmacy school in the downtown corridor, and the lasting and meaningful impacts that the University of Hartford and Trinity College have made over their many years in the Capital City, the UConn relocation will provide a prime opportunity to enhance their graduate and undergraduate programs now based in West Hartford and will serve as a catalyst for new development and economic growth along the I-91 and I-84 corridors. At present 300,000 vehicles a day pass through Hartford and we are the home of the regional workforce. Together with the Intermodal Triangle Project, a \$20 million infrastructure improvement project in the downtown that stretches from Union Station to Main Street and will improve walkability, vibrancy and sustainability in the downtown area, this project will allow for increased accessibility to low-income students, better transitions for community college students and new opportunities for growth in the fields of business, engineering, public administration and social work.

Over the last two years we have made great strides in making Hartford a Capital City that each of you – and all of our approximately 125,000 residents – are proud of. We have collaboratively worked with the Capital Region Development Authority and other state agencies to bring at least 1,000 units of housing to the downtown in the next 2 years and with our congressional delegation to secure an \$11 million TIGER grant (for the Intermodal Triangle Project). Many seeds of growth have already been sown and my Development Services team is working diligently to stabilize existing businesses throughout the city and identify potential partners who want to be part of our renaissance and rebirth.

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I implore each of you to fully examine, review and analyze the many beneficial components included in this bill. Like me, I have no doubt that you will find them all to be worthy of your time and support. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and suggestions with you and hope that you will favorably support this ambitious and critical investment in the University of Connecticut and your Capital City.