



Testimony by Dr. Steven Minkler
Dean of Academic Affairs, Middlesex Community College
Before the Higher Education Committee
February 14, 2013

Good afternoon Senator Bye, Representative Willis, and members of the Higher Education Committee. I am Dr. Steven Minkler, Dean of Academic Affairs at Middlesex Community College. I have been Middlesex's Academic Dean since January 2012 – my latest assignment in a 25-year career in Connecticut's community colleges, where I've also served at Capital and Northwestern.

I am here today with my colleagues to testify in support of the proposed bill Number 5618: *An Act Authorizing Bonds for Capital Projects at Middlesex Community College*.

Our Mission Statement promises, "In all that it does, Middlesex Community College strives to be the college of its community." We strive to be the college of our community by offering job training certificates and professional degree programs in career fields demanded by students and employers in the State of Connecticut. We strive to be the college of our community by providing a strong liberal arts education so that graduates can successfully transfer to baccalaureate institutions including the state universities, UConn, and Wesleyan. And, we strive to be the college of our community by being deeply connected to the world around us. We are embedding service learning in our curriculum, linking students with pre-professional internships, sitting on boards of local agencies, working closely with K-12 colleagues, and offering our facilities as community centers in Middletown and Meriden.

Middlesex's faculty are in leadership roles in statewide efforts to implement legislation passed last year regarding transfer and articulation, developmental education, and improving the transition from high school to college. The faculty are creating new, "in-demand" programs such as Veterinary Technology, Health Information Management, Radiology specialties such as MRI, CT-SCAN, and mammography; and, Computer Engineering Technology.

All of this has to happen somewhere. Middlesex's main campus was designed in the early 1970s. Our three original buildings house art studios, science labs, and classrooms that

pale in comparison to those our students found while in high school. Our newest building is 20 years old and will be renovated to house a New Media Communication career training program. All four buildings pre-date the World Wide Web, “smart classrooms,” and collaborative learning pedagogies that are common “best practices” in the year 2013. Despite smarter class scheduling and a growing selection of online courses, we have simply outgrown the Middletown Campus. And while we have done a great job at keeping these obsolete facilities fully functional for teaching and learning, we should also not be penalized for the good stewardship we have shown to our campus by being overlooked for a new, modern, building.

Meanwhile, our manufacturing program has been flying under the radar. We are fully enrolled at 41 students. The only limitation is that the manufacturing lab is in a small, leased space in the city of Meriden apart from both the Middletown Campus and the Meriden Center. We can only expand this rapidly growing program by moving it to either primary site.

Middlesex did not benefit from the community college building boom that started circa 2000 and continued through the 2012 opening of a new downtown campus for Gateway Community College. Bill 5618 would allow Middlesex to design and build a state-of-the-art, environmentally sustainable building, that will house cutting-edge programs in health, life sciences, and engineering; and add space for new programming in arts, communication, and theater. The new space will also allow us to reconfigure our existing buildings for improved classroom spaces, and English and Math labs to assist with our developmental education initiatives.

In summary, the new facilities that Bill 5618 would provide, would help us fulfill the promise of being “the college of our community.”

Thank you for your attention, and for your consideration of this important bill.