



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE MATTHEW LESSER
ONE HUNDREDETH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 4014
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

HOME: 860-344-1230
CAPITOL: 860-240-8585
TOLL FREE: 800-842-8287
FAX: 860-240-0208
E-MAIL: Matthew.Lesser@cga.ct.gov

VICE CHAIRMAN
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

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EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Testimony of
Representative Matthew Lesser, 100th District
February 14, 2013

Senator Bye, Representative Willis, Senator Boucher, Representative LeGeyt and distinguished vice chairs and ranking members:

I want to speak to you this day in support of House Bill 5618, which would authorize bonds in support of Middlesex Community College.

We live in an age of austerity particularly for our institutions of higher learning. However over the last few years as some community colleges have received funding, Middlesex has not. And the upshot is that Middlesex is now the most crowded institution of higher learning in our state.

A recent study found that Middlesex has 1784 students per 100,000 square feet of usable classroom space, far and away the highest in the state.

We all know we must do more with less these days. Middlesex has certainly done that expanding its programs students in Wallingford and Meriden, even as the footprint of its main campus remains woefully inadequate.

This year the Board of Regents of Higher Education recommended capital funding for a new academic building. That request unfortunately was not included in the list of approved projects in the Governor's capital budget. Later this year, Middlesex will be completing a full facilities master plan to address the severe overcrowding on its main campus.

When you speak to students at Middlesex you hear almost universal praise the quality of the programs it offers. President Wasecha is providing dynamic new leadership with a focus on sustainability. On a side note, as ranking member of the Internship Committee I

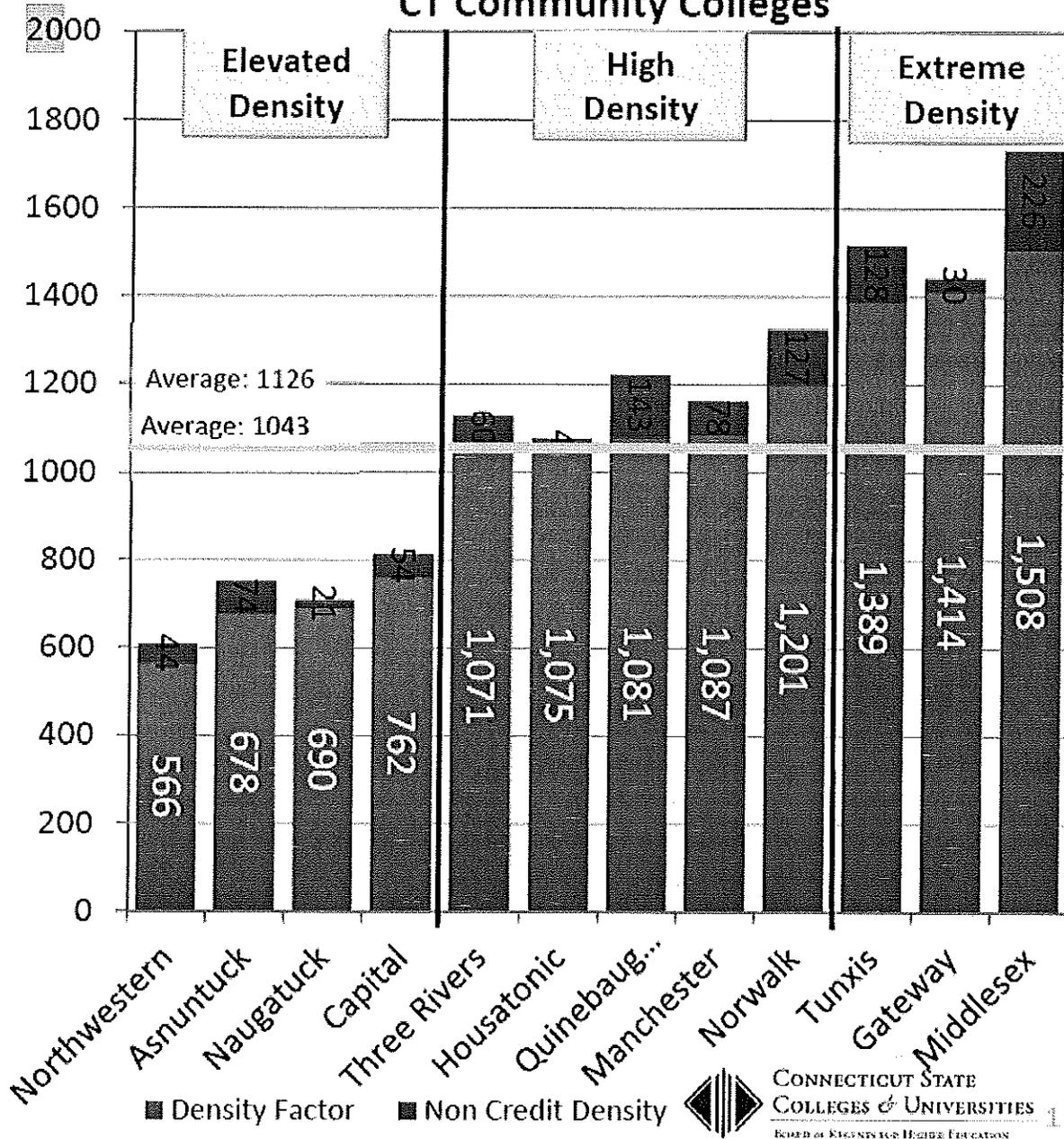
have to note that Middlesex has more students participating in the Capitol Internship program than any other school.

I do not intend to pit one college against another. My guess is that every legislator on this committee has a worthy institution of higher learning either in their district or nearby. All have seen budget pressures. However the overcrowding at Middlesex is unique and stands alone.

And it is my hope that this legislation will help facilitate discussions between this committee, the Board of Regents, and the Office of Policy and Management, on how best to address this critical problem

Thank you for considering this bill and thank you for the opportunity to speak before this committee.

CT Community Colleges



Users / 100,000 gross square feet. Source: Board of Regents.