

Hello Members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Mellina Silver and I am currently attending Eastern Connecticut State University as an undergraduate. I stand in front of you as a Connecticut citizen, senator of student government, most importantly a student. I have no hidden agenda coming up here today other than to accomplish gaining your respect towards increasing funding for higher education. I am here to simply fight for my future along with the future of Connecticut Education.

I have three main points that need addressing. I would like to talk about how funding affects me personally, the problems decreasing funding will lead to, and the long-term yield of investing in education.

I urge you to look at a new landscape in which education is a collaboration of communication between students and government. Hearing the consequences of many state schools running a deficit it makes studying for my classes much more difficult. For a student that supports my education through a part-time job and loans, tuition increases will have a burden on my academic success. Not only will decreased funding for higher education impact tuition costs; it will affect many programs and resources available for students. More funding can ensure a quality education. To put the allocation of funding into perspective, I would like to give you of an idea of the past budget cuts. Cuts for funding for public higher education has totaled more than 15% over the last two years which translates to \$93.2 million dollars, I'm don't know about you but for a college student that's a large chunk of change. Tuition increase has been the after affect and since 2004 alone, tuition has increased from about \$5000 to \$9000 a year for instate residents, nearly doubling. Its quite concerning that my generation may not have the same access of obtaining a post secondary education if factors such as tuition increase continue to persist.

Investment in education leads to lucrative returns. By investing in the citizens of Connecticut, you are making a long-term investment in human capital that would sustain a competitive workforce despite the fluctuation of the economy. According to an article published in Times Magazine, by the year 2020 two thirds of all jobs require post secondary education. If we plan on being a strong contender for the economic future, we need progress and realization. True education progress takes investment, collaboration and commitment. I understand allocating the budget is a large burden with many complexities, your effort and dedication is strongly appreciated in ensuring increased funding towards higher education. Please take into consideration the cumulative and detrimental hindrances that can impede upon the younger generations to come. Thank you for your time and considerations in these regards.