

Testimony of Judy Reid, Senator of Student Government Association, Eastern Connecticut State University, to Members of the Appropriations Committee

February 24, 2014

Members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Judy Reid and I am a Sophomore at Eastern Connecticut State University. I am in favor of more funding for the state schools – including both four year institutions and community colleges. Education of our population is the most fundamental and essential component of our American society. Without knowledge, how can we understand why things must be done for the greater good? How can people act in a way that will benefit both themselves and the greater community?

Prices as they are in order to attend college or university currently are putting a majority of the population pursuing higher education into a debt so great that it is equivalent to a house payment. Many of these are students just out of high school – 18 years old and 21 by the time they graduate. These young adults will be paying for a house that they can't afford before they have moved out of their parents' home and before they have a stable job that can support that kind of expenditure. Something must change in order for our young people not to face this hardship and promote them to instead become successful independent people who will increase our knowledge instead of being forced to work at any job that will help them to start paying back their student loans.

As a student in debt myself, I have a firsthand knowledge of what it is like to live under the pressure of not knowing what will happen after I graduate. Will I be able to pay back my student loans without living with my parents for the next 10 years? Will I be able to get a job that I enjoy or one that will support a lifestyle that I would want? Or will I be forced to take a job that I hate and that does not contribute to my life's aspirations simply in order to start regular payments on my student debt?

Our population depends on the education of students. We must allow this education to be accessible and free ultimately. Give our school the funding they need to allow students to become the pillars of our society. Help our students to attain four-year degrees without dropping out midway because of financial pressure. This is the most important thing we can do to decrease poverty and ignorance in our society today.