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Resident of Falls Village
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Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I began attending Northwestern Connecticut Community College in the spring of 2011. I completed my application and registered for a class at the very last minute. I was very interested in taking an English Composition course, but the ones that suited my work schedule were all full. My counselor thought I might enjoy a particular English professor's class, so he encouraged me to email the professor to explain my situation and to ask that he allow me to join the class. With the help of a very patient counselor, a fast moving admissions department, and an open minded English professor, my college career began at 6:30pm the same day I finished all my paperwork.

Returning to education was a huge decision for me. I was a disinterested, easily distracted student in high school. Although I did very well in specific classes I enjoyed, I graduated with a class rank in the seventies in a class of one hundred and twenty. I decided to put off attending college for at least one year after graduating in 2005. One year quickly turned into five. I worked full time, often juggling multiple jobs, and enjoyed reading in my free time. I began to feel that I was really missing something by not attending college. I started to think seriously about going back to school, but after such a lengthy break from education I was pretty nervous.

It turned out that my counselor made a good call sending me to that particular English class. After a few class meetings I began to feel confident that I was in the right place. I enjoyed the reading, the writing, and the discussions. The diverse backgrounds and personal experiences of my classmates increased the scope and depth of class discussions. By the end of the semester I was hooked. I earned an "A" in the class, and signed up for two classes the following semester.

Since that first English Composition class I have become a full time student, and plan to graduate this spring with an Associate Degree in History. I have also had the opportunity to get involved with activities on campus. I am currently the president of the History Association, Vice president of our chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, Secretary of the Student Senate, and just recently, Secretary of the Journalism Club. I am a volunteer tutor in Psychology, Sociology, and History. I have remained employed through out my college career, although I have given up a significant number of paying hours to pursue my education. I have received a lot of support from professors, school faculty, and friends along the way. Many of my fellow students are juggling employment and/or family responsibilities while completing their education. They are among the busiest and most committed people I have ever met. Many of my professors can be found on campus at nearly all hours of the day and night. If they aren't on campus, I have actually received prompt email responses past midnight.

My time at Northwestern has had a major positive impact on my life. I have met some incredible people, both faculty and students. This experience would not

have been possible for me without the geographic and economic accessibility offered by the community colleges. This experience would not be available to many students, including many of my friends and peers, without the community colleges. Too often, these schools have been characterized by statistics rather than the very real success stories that they achieve.

I hope that I have highlighted how important these institutions are to their students, faculty, and the community. I ask that you keep this in mind as you make decisions about the budget. Money invested in these institutions will reap benefits not only in the individual lives of students and members of the college community, but the entire state of Connecticut.