

Sen. Beth Bye and Rep. Toni Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee
Good Evening,

My name is Booker DeVaughn, 12 Country Lane, West Hartford, CT. I am here this evening as a private citizen to speak on Public Act 12-40 and Transform CSCU 2020. By way of background I am president emeritus of Three Rivers Community College, Norwich, CT. I ask that you support additional funding for developmental education and remove the time restrictions to allow more time for students to successfully prepare for college-level courses. As you are aware the law provides for both limiting the time a student will be able to remain in developmental education classes regardless of need and further calls for the complete revamping of developmental education as currently practiced.

I often refer to myself as a community college person because I am a community college graduate and because I enjoyed a wonderfully fulfilling career as a community college professional after having spent many years in various educational positions at a four-year college and as a basic literacy instructor in the anti-poverty program just to mention a few. In 2011 my alma mater, Massachusetts Bay Community College, honored me by naming me the distinguished alumni of the year. Along with the award presentation I took the opportunity to visit the campus and reflect back on my beginnings there. I made comparisons about the tremendous changes made over the years not only at my alma matter but at community colleges all over America. While literally a multitude of changes have taken place of the many years of the history of community colleges, one of the most striking changes has been the tremendous increase in the number of students in need of developmental education. Gone are the days when colleges offered a few students in need of development education perhaps a developmental reading class and a low enrollment English composition class, accompanied by a great deal of faculty extra help and expected the student to succeed. Throughout my more that three decades as a community college professional I was always struck by the rapidly growing need for developmental education in our state and nation-wide. All too many students arrive on campus unprepared to do college work. Some are recent high school graduates; some victims of the academic achievement gap (CT has the largest achievement gap between black and white students in the nation); others are newly unemployed older students who have been away from formal education for 10, 15, 20 or more years. Among these older adult students are veterans who have spent the last several years in service to their country. All of these students need time to prepare and build up their academic skills in order to adequately prepare for college and employment. By adequately serving the students in need of developmental education we reduce unemployment and provide industry with workers for existing jobs. Without adequately serving many of the students in need of developmental education we limit access to students who need community colleges the most. The open door will slowly close resulting in adding to the ranks of the unemployed and perhaps more important, closing the American dream for many of our citizens. Rigid restrictions on developmental education results in decreased access.

To meet these student needs colleges have developed new techniques and approaches to the extent that funding allowed. Some of these strategies include accelerated courses, academic boot

camps over the summer, embedded students with extra help, and the list goes on. Some of our colleges are part of a national effort known as Achieving the Dream with funding from the Lumina and Gates Foundation. New strategies continue to be developed. Funding is needed to explore additional strategies and to implement proven strategies that definitely improve success and lead to improved graduation and program completion rates.

In conclusion, I request that you modify the restrictions placed on students in PA 12-40 and provide funding to implement proven strategies. Additionally, adequate funding for the program referred to as Transform CSCU 2020 will address many of the issues of low retention and keep access open to vulnerable students who have been served successfully by community colleges for over a century. Thank you very much for your attention to this important matter.

2/24/14