

Testimony in support of HB 5241 AA Requiring a Study of a Pay-It-Forward
College Payment Plan

February 27, 2014

To the Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement

Greetings. My name is Andrew and I am here today to voice my vigorous concern about the student debt issue that faces tens of thousands of Connecticut citizens. I am one of them. Having started my higher education in community college I was unable to move onto a four year school because I had already incurred a debt of thousands of dollars that I could not keep afloat paying the minimum each month. I had to then step away from school and take the only job I could get that allowed me to live free of state support. After several years of hard work I was able to just pay off my loans and then continue towards my bachelor's. I found myself a college grad having to live pay check to pay check.

As a person in their mid 30's I have been affected by this crisis for almost half my life. Though I no longer am plagued by student loans it still directly effects me. My credit is poor, I am unable to get bank loans, and I had to stop my dream of becoming a teacher because I had to get a full time job to live, make rent, and finish my degree on line. Finishing two years of school, took my five because of balancing work and the cost. To incur more debt to become a teacher, didn't even seem worth it. Even today my long time girlfriend and I have had to put off marriage, starting a family and purchasing a home due to my past debt and her current one. This directly affects our local and state economy. So this directly affects all of us.

My father who went to school in the early 60's was able to work each summer and earn enough to pay for each of his four years of under grad and then go on to grad school. Today he is retired and is a success due to hard work and low college tuition. This system used to work for students through a combination of fair investment from the state in higher education, and costs that remained manageable for school. I hope this study will also address these issues.

Today so many Connecticut students and young adults work hard but keep getting pulled down by outrageous tuition. Something needs to change. I call upon you, our elected officials to step in and stop Connecticut's youth from starting adulthood in massive debt. Please reverse this. Allow higher education to once again be a step up instead of a burden. You can do this by allowing incoming students to no longer be forced to take out these loans before their first 101 class and instead pay it back after they have graduated and entered the work force; debt free.

Thank you.