



State of Connecticut
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PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

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**Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky (85th) in Support of HB 5241, An Act Requiring
a Study of a Pay-It-Forward College Payment Plan
Before the Higher Education Committee
Thursday, February 27, 2013**

10:30 a.m. in Room 1E

The Program Review and Investigations Committee (PRI), which I co-chair with Sen. John Kissel, issued our report in January 2014 and raised legislation concerning University of Connecticut's Affordability to Students. College prices, including UConn's, have risen beyond general consumer inflation. In addition to recommendations of greater disclosure of prices and transferability of college credits to lower costs, PRI staff provided an overview of six policy options to enhance college affordability.

Several options require considerable study regarding the mechanics of implementation, costs, and/or appropriateness of application across all state higher education institutions as opposed to a single flagship university. We suggested the legislature, executive branch, or the state's higher education institutions may consider them worthy of further action. These options are: Pay-It-Forward, State Promise Programs, Tuition Freeze, On-Line Education, Finish-in-Three Degrees, and Competency-Based Learning. I also have constituents interested in these programs, which encouraged me to investigate the upfront cost to the state of establishing these forms of tuition assistance.

According to Office of Legislative Research (OLR), the initial cost of Pay-It-Forward is significant for up to 20 years before the program becomes self-sustaining. While it is clear that Pay-It-Forward will help students whose incomes are not rising as fast as the cost of higher education, we may need to take additional time through a study to determine how the State of Connecticut would pay for the initial investment in this program. We encourage the committee to look at the full report which is posted on our website and our raised bill HB 5379 which addresses tuition assistance.