

Testimony of Tom Swan

Executive Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG)

In Support of HB 5241 AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF PAY IT FORWARD COLLEGE PAYMENT PLAN

February 27, 2014

Good Afternoon Senator Cassano, Representative Willis and other members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, my name is Tom Swan and I am the Executive Director of the CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG). On behalf of CCAG's over 25,000 member families I want to thank you for raising HB 432 AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF PAY IT FORWARD COLLEGE PAYMENT PLAN and urge its passage.

CCAG applauds your willingness to address one of our countries most pressing challenges: access to higher education and the related student debt. It keeps people from going to school, following the careers they want, limits their ability to start families, and places great levels of strain on families. It is clear that we need to find new ways to finance education, especially post-secondary education and the idea of a progressive tax on future earnings appears to make sense. Some things we would recommend the study include:

- Public hearings around the state.
- Active participation by students, parents, recent graduates and financial aid officers.
- Possible ways to ensure adequate funding for higher education, especially in the first few years before people start to earn money to pay it back.
- Ideas to recommend to our congressional delegation to advocate for in the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act that would allow us to still get our share of federal financial aid resources if we were to go forward with such a plan.

Our evolving economy is going to make it imperative that more and more workers will need to take advantage of educational opportunities throughout their lives and we should encourage this. Finding a way to have money not be a barrier to education is the right thing to do. Pay it Forward is a great idea to spark this discussion and potentially a very good solution. Thank you again and we urge its passage.