

## Appropriation Committee Public Hearing

### Testimony on Biennial Budget

Members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for your time and attention today, to listen to our testimonies, and further your cause in serving our state.

My name is Elizabeth Pelletier; I am a junior Eastern Connecticut State University studying Psychology. As a member of Student Government Association, I speak in the interest of all students. From my personal experiences, I know students' cannot bear the burden of cuts to higher education. Both of my parents were born, and raised in Bristol, Connecticut. Neither one of my parents had the financial ability to finish a college degree, even with tuition being fractions of what it is today. They wanted a better life for me, and did everything in their power to give me as many opportunities as possible to succeed. My dad worked a physically demanding job, often missing family dinners to make ends meet. My mom was a home day care provider, until my senior year of high school.

Three years ago, two days after Christmas, my mother was hospitalized. She had bacterial meningitis, which took away her ability to walk, and limited mobility in her arms. My mom never lifted boxes up six flights of stairs, helped me decorate a dorm room, or sent a care package. She still is not home with us. All the small moments, for those of you who are parents, look forward to, and have fond memories of. On top of this emotional burden, there is financial burden. She will never be an average member of the workforce. My dad is essentially a single parent, supporting my two brothers, who will soon be attending colleges in Connecticut's public school system. My parents cannot afford to pay for my college education. Despite the fact that I receive financial aid, and have an honors scholarship, my dad must still find a way to contribute several hundred dollars each semester. Every cent of the money I earn from my on-campus job goes to pay for food, and other essentials.

If funding for Higher Education is cut, myself, and many other students will not be able to afford a college education, one that is so desperately needed in today's competitive job market. Universities will be less able to provide financial aid, the on-campus job that I need, will be cut along with the department's funding. Students will take on all these burdens, with an increased tuition. Trimming away from the budgets of the CONNSCU system again will destroy the firmament of any school, the students.

Thank you.