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“Devastating” is the best word I can think of to describe the budget cuts to the University of Connecticut that the Governor has announced in his proposed budget. These cuts strike me as contrary to the message that the Governor’s “pro-education” budget address put forth. It is my hope and my plea that the legislators in the General Assembly push back on this \$40 million cut and propose a more rational route than the Governor has proposed. As a lifetime resident of the State of Connecticut, I have two parents who have worked hard and paid taxes in this state. I understand the budget woes that this state faces. I understand that with a large budget deficit, difficult decisions need to be made. But, there are many compelling and legitimate reasons why it would be irrational to cut UConn funding by \$40 million. A cut like this would negatively affect the students, families, and taxpayers of this state.

First, a huge cut to the block grant at UConn would have a detrimental effect on the academic programs that the University provides. President Herbst has outlined what some of these cuts might look like, and the details paint a grim picture for UConn students. Cuts to academic programs and faculty would translate into less class availability, less resources, and ultimately, less degrees for some of Connecticut’s brightest students. This could mean that a lifelong resident of the state, like myself, would not be able to finish a degree he or she started nearly two years ago. It would mean that my classmates would have a harder time meeting with professors and following their educational paths to successful careers.

Next, a cut like this translates into a tax on Connecticut families who are trying to send their children to their home state’s flagship university. If \$40 million is taken from the block grant to the University of Connecticut, it will incentivize the institution to raise tuition. In fact, I would predict that tuition will skyrocket after a cut like this, as the University Administration and Board of Trustees struggle to make up for such a difference in funding. It may not happen next year, since the University seems committed to sticking to their tuition plan, but it would almost certainly happen in the following year. As a current sophomore at UConn, I believe that it would be a shame for some of my fellow students to have to sacrifice finishing their degrees at UConn because the tuition skyrocketed in their senior year. This is especially saddening when so many of these students grew up wanting to be Huskies. They watched basketball championships, football bowl games, and their brothers, sisters, and cousins attend the University before them. If they are anything like me, then they were even jealous of their State Representative when he had the chance to meet Jim Calhoun and Geno Auriemma on UConn Day at the Capitol. A cut of \$40 million would cause a tuition increase and, consequently, pass an added tax along to these Connecticut students and their parents after they have already invested so much in the University through taxes. This is especially ironic because Governor Malloy campaigned on the promise of not raising taxes, but this is exactly what this cut would do to Connecticut families who are trying to provide their students with a quality, in-state education.

Furthermore, the University Administration has been adamant about UConn being a place where we can keep our best and brightest in the state. But, as the amount of students accepted from out-of-state continues to rise, Connecticut families are asking themselves whether this is truly the mission. The fact is that UConn can charge much higher rates to out-of-state students than it can for in-state students. Therefore, it is economically advantageous to do so. As a result,

a huge cut like this would only incentivize the University to continue and speed up the trend of accepting more students from other states. This would be to the detriment of the families that the members of the Connecticut General Assembly are elected to serve.

Finally, I would like to discuss a couple of points that have caused some angst in the state legislature. The first is the point that UConn is a top-heavy school when it comes to employing administrators. The second is that President Herbst recently took a large pay raise after painting the picture of a dire economic situation for the University. The truth is that many students have voiced concerns over these two points as well, but we do not control how our money is spent. This is especially true when we only have one undergraduate student member on the Board of Trustees. We are hoping to change that this year with a bill that would add another member, but right now, we are asking this legislature not to punish students and Connecticut families because legislators disagree with the hiring and employment practices of the Administration.

At the end of the day, a cut like this really does not hurt Susan Herbst or other administrators very much. Instead, it hurts students, parents, families, and taxpayers who have invested in this university. It hurts the Connecticut student that will no longer be able to afford his or her own state school. Most of all, it hurts our state, as bright students from Connecticut look elsewhere for education, employment, and a more financially stable life.