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INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

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DENNIS WILLIAMS, President



GARY CASTEEL, Secretary-Treasurer

### **APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE TESTIMONY**

**SUBMITTED BY: Graduate Employee Union Local 6950 – International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (GEU-UAW)**

**May 11, 2015**

**Ken Lang, UAW International Representative**

S.R. No. 37 RESOLUTION and H.R. No. 32 RESOLUTION PROPOSING APPROVAL OF A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE GRADUATE EMPLOYEE UNION LOCAL 6950-INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA (GEU-UAW).

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Ken Lang and I am an International Representative with the United Auto Workers (UAW). I served as lead organizer and chief negotiator working with Graduate Assistants (GA) at UConn. With me is Cera Fisher, a Teaching Assistant (TA) in the Ecological and Evolutionary Biology department and elected member of our bargaining committee.

We are proud to be here on behalf of 2,200 UConn GAs. In partnership with UCONN, we also seek your approval of Senate Resolution 37 and House Resolution 32.

UConn GAs are students working on a post graduate degree, but they are also state employees essential to maintaining Connecticut's exemplary commitment to its higher educational infrastructure. As TAs, they make quality, affordable education possible for thousands of undergraduates and take pride in the quality of their teaching. As Research Assistants (RA), they do creative and innovative research under the supervision of faculty that helps generate millions in research grants and contracts each year.

By way of background, UConn GAs approached UAW well over a year ago, seeking help to form a union. By early spring of 2014, they had organized their union with support from a majority of the GAs signed up for GEU-UAW. On April 17, 2014, UConn recognized GEU-UAW as the union for GAs. A tentative agreement was reached in April and overwhelmingly ratified.

The agreement before you today is fair and addresses many important core economic issues. By bringing GAs in to the partnership plan, we provide them better healthcare at a lower cost than last year. Additionally, wage increases contained in the contract are well within the pattern approved already by the administration and the Appropriations Committee.

In closing, these contract provisions will first and foremost help GAs daily lives. We also strongly believe this contract will help UConn enhance its ability to recruit the best and brightest graduate students strengthening their continued growth as the State's most well-known academic and research powerhouse. We are proud to have worked so effectively with the University to negotiate this contract that benefits the GAs, UConn and the State. We look forward to growing this partnership in the future. Thank you.