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Testimony in support of HB 6117

Dear Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Eduardo J. Gonzalez and I am a student at University of Connecticut. I am writing to support HB 6117: An Act Concerning the Use of Open-Source Textbooks in Higher Education.

The cost of attaining a vocational education that can be applied in the real world is a financial burden itself for the average college student, and is only rising. On a similar slope, the cost of books has been rising practically parallel to the initial cost of tuition, which only continues to pile on and on to the total cost. According to College Board, the average student will spend \$1,200 per year on textbooks, as well as supplies. That's two semesters, with roughly 3-4 classes per semester, which makes the \$1,200 cost crumble down to be roughly \$150-\$200 per book! With a single book costing that much, many students are put at a standstill. The fork in the road where they are stuck trying to decide between spending that money out of pocket, or opting out of buying the book, which ultimately could take a toll on their education. I myself have been stuck here a couple of times already during my first two semesters at UConn, unfortunately. More times than less, I ended up choosing not to buy the book if I felt that I couldn't afford it. However many of my friends have decided to enter the medical field, where a single book and lab procedure booklet can end up costing a grand total of \$300. They were not left with that choice, putting them in a state of desperation. Now I don't know if it's just me, but I believe that the additional fee to be in line for a complete education is terrible. The students are being robbed blind.

To help combat the outrageous and only growing price, the idea of an Open Textbook comes into play. An open textbook is an effective alternative that may ultimately save countless dollars for the students as well as the school itself. It would be distributed online to the students and will be an online accessible textbook that would allow a cost-free escape from the binds of financial turmoil. The open textbook will create an authentic learning experience in the classroom that wouldn't depend on whether or not a student could afford to pay the demands of required texts.

So, I urge all members of this committee to support HB 6117.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Eduardo Gonzalez