

Testimony for the Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee

From

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Goodwin College

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On behalf of Goodwin College I am submitting testimony on House Bill 6715-- AN ACT REQUIRING CONNECTICUT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STATE AUTHORIZATION RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT REGARDING DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS. Goodwin College is in favor of HB 6715, which will permit Connecticut institutions of higher education to participate in a voluntary state authorization reciprocity agreement (SARA).

Goodwin College serves a diverse student population, many of whom are adult learners. These students are more likely to already be members of the work force while also attending school. The Online Studies department has created numerous online courses to serve this group, as well as one fully online program, RN to BSN. Distance learning makes it possible for students everywhere to earn college credits while balancing work, family, and other responsibilities; however, the inconsistent regulations created by each of the states has made it difficult to expand our program to students who reside outside of Connecticut.

Practically every state regulates these types of programs differently. Each has their own definition of what it means to have a physical presence within their state, their own application process and fees, and some states even require approval from multiple governing entities.

Goodwin College has gotten authorization or exemption in a handful of states, and others have assured us that our activities do not fall within their definition of physical presence, but we have found these procedures to be burdensome and inefficient. Adoption of SARA would allow us, as well as other Connecticut institutions, to more easily offer our online programs to a wider audience while still maintaining program integrity.

Goodwin College is eager to begin the process of becoming a SARA approved school and encourages you to support this bill. Thank you for considering my testimony.