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**Written testimony for the
Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee
Judith B. Greiman
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
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Raised Bill 966-AN ACT CONCERNING SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EXAMINERS AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

This bill would allow sexual assault forensic examiners to provide immediate care and treatment to victims of sexual assault at health care facilities operated by an institution of higher education.

We have some concerns with this and urge you to keep it voluntary not mandatory. Most campus health centers are not licensed as either infirmaries or outpatient clinics, and, so the change would impact only the small handful with this designation. There are vast differences in capacity, staffing, and set up of health services across the colleges and universities in Connecticut. Any requirement that institutions have someone trained to provide this service at all times would require universities to double or triple the staff they currently have to accommodate this requirement. A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) exam can last 3 to 4 hours, requires a clinician one on one for that amount of time solely dedicated to that purpose and require in-depth training and certification.

While we certainly support more access to SANE services for victims, currently most hospitals cannot even guarantee that at all times there will be a trained SANE available in the emergency room and would, therefore, certainly not have staff available to come to a university. Additionally, a SANE would be focused solely on evidence collection. Other important medical interventions that typically are part of the evaluation and treatment of a student reporting a sexual assault in a hospital emergency department setting would be difficult for a most campus centers to provide. For example, in the case of HIV prophylaxis, ideally this should be administered within two hours of exposure for maximal efficacy. In most campus clinic settings, staff do not prescribe antiretrovirals for HIV. These medications need to be prescribed by providers with expertise using these medications as they have the potential for significant toxicity. Hospital emergency departments are better able to dispense these medications directly to the student at the time he/she presents.

We assume that the intention of this proposed legislation is to keep the student in a familiar environment and minimize stress, but services need to be comprehensive and not fragmented. Funding a statewide SANE program with a focus on creating an infrastructure that allows for training of SANEs and creating an on-call system regionally would make the most impact for victims.

Albertus Magnus College, Connecticut College, Fairfield University, Goodwin College, Mitchell College, Quinnipiac University, Rensselaer at Hartford, Sacred Heart University, St. Vincent's College, Trinity College, University of Bridgeport, University of Hartford, University of New Haven, University of Saint Joseph, Wesleyan University, Yale University