

Good evening members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is James Josey and I am a student at Charter Oak State College. It is my pleasure to come before you today to talk about the importance of increased funding for higher education. Who am I to bring this before you? I feel there is a need to know my background before we get into the matter at hand.

I am a residence of New Britain who before Charter Oak didn't see a need for a higher education. As a child I grew up in Hartford in a neighborhood where you don't know anything about a good education let alone funding to help you out. You hear a lot of bad things about the area where I grew up, from gun shots to selling drugs; that was my backyard. I always dreamed about graduating from high school but, never thought about the next step. One day something woke up in me and I decided to move out of Hartford to Manchester with my grandmother. While in school I met a very special someone who happens to be my wife now. Even though I was living in a different city, I found myself around the same influences that brought me down in Hartford. Once I graduated from Manchester High School, college was still the last thing on my mind. It was because of my wife I decided to go back to school. Yet, there was still my issue of having the same mentality and I didn't have the funds to go.

At this time I was introduced to Capital Community College which did not work out for me. Between my daughter and work I couldn't get to the classes. My wife told me about Charter Oak State College where she graduated with both her Associates and Bachelors. She told me about the CT Wage program which helped with funding her education, so I applied for the program myself and was accepted. I worked very hard and recently earned my Associates degree due to the support from the program. I am grateful for even receiving that but, understand that I need to go further in order to reach my goal to become a school psychologist or guidance counselor. My wife started me on the path and Ms. Bell, Coordinator for the CT Wage program is taking me further. With this being said it is stated that 80% of children with both parents who have degrees succeed in receiving a degree as well. As a father myself I like those odds.

As I speak to you today I am working on my Bachelor's degree with the help of the whole Charter Oak State College community, as well as family and friends. Without additional funding for schools like Charter Oak, it would become difficult for students like me to achieve the next level of education. Therefore, increased funding in support of the CSCU System is extremely important. Thank you for your time.

James Josey, New Britain, CT

2-24-15