

**Paul DaSilva**  
**Testimony for Connecticut Joint Committee on Appropriations**  
**Tuesday, February 24, 2015**

My name is Paul DaSilva, a sophomore undergraduate at the University of Connecticut, double majoring in political science and economics.

I am here to testify because I would like to convey the anguish and profound consternation that my peers and I feel as a result of the \$40 million proposed cut to the budget for UConn for next fiscal year.

As a Connecticut resident, I have been extremely pleased with the tremendous growth my university has had over the past decade. When I was faced during my senior year of high school with having to select a school to attend, I knew that UConn was all-around the best option. It was affordable, close to home, and ranked better academically than other institutions I was accepted into, like Rutgers, the University of Delaware and UMass. And after the Next Gen CT initiative took off last year, even though I am not a STEM major, I knew that it was a great way forward for the university and for people like my roommates, who are both pursuing careers in science.

Unfortunately, the budget cut is a massive step in the wrong direction. In a time when college admissions are getting more and more competitive each year, and UConn is trying to attract the best and brightest, it is simply counter-intuitive to begin a reversal of all the progress made.

I understand that Connecticut is in a deep budget deficit, and as a fiscal conservative myself, recognize the need to cut certain areas of the state budget. The adverse effects however, of targeting higher education outweigh in my mind the benefit of doing so. As college students, who already have to bear the brunt of tens of thousands of dollars of student debt, I myself will probably end up with over \$50,000 in student loans upon graduation (and that's before matriculation into grad school), it just doesn't seem right to place the burden of balancing the budget on the backs of college students.

Tuition increases are inevitable; already the university's Board of Trustees approved a 6.5% tuition hike earlier in January. Most students were greatly perturbed at this, and expressed their feelings vividly on social media. And furthermore, it is likewise likely, the university will seek to admit more out-of-state students in the place of CT students because they can realize from them higher tuition and fees. Having a brother who is currently in tenth grade at New Fairfield High School, and who yearns of coming to the same school I had the privilege of attending, this budget cut will directly affect him, due to a combination of the higher cost of attendance as well as presumed lower rates of acceptance for Connecticut students.

Let me just mention that I am aware many UConn students and probably many legislators were a bit displeased with the Board of Trustees' decision to give the President a significant pay raise. But it is also noteworthy that we students have just one representative on the Board, and therefore have no control over how the university decides to spend its money.

I fully understand, as I already mentioned, the need to balance the budget and get Connecticut on sound fiscal footing, but there must be a more prudent way to do it.

Thank you for your time.