



Statement Concerning UCHC Block Grant & Bioscience CT Funding

Who I am: Diomedes Tsitouras, Executive Director, University of Connecticut Health Center, American Association of University Professors (UCHC-AAUP)

Who We Are: The UCHC-AAUP is the Chapter of the AAUP that represents over 500 faculty working at least 20% time at the UConn Health Center. The Chapter protects and furthers the interests of the UCHC faculty by negotiating improvements in wages, benefits, and working conditions and by protecting members of the bargaining unit from arbitrary and discriminatory actions by administrators that are in violation of the CBA and UConn policy. The Chapter is also responsible for protecting academic freedom and participation in shared governance of the Health Center. The Chapter participates in legislative and political action to ensure that higher education in the State of Connecticut is adequately funded and that public education in general is protected.

www.uchc-aaup.org

Thank Co-Chairs, Ranking members, and members of the Committee for the chance to speak today. I am Diomedes Tsitouras, Executive Director of the American Association of University Professors, University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC-AAUP). We represent the 550 faculty whom engage in research of new discoveries, teach the next generation of healthcare professionals, and treat countless members of the public. We are here today to thank you for your past investment in UCONN Health and also to ask you to continue this progress. The governor's budget calling for a %1.8 increase to the UCHC block grant and continued funding to bioscience is a good start in fulfilling this objective. This appropriation is crucial to ensuring our institution remains competitive for the future. Since I began in this position 6 months ago, I have personally met with some of our new young faculty hires, in psychiatry, oral health, and general medicine. Many have expressed excitement about becoming a part of growing and thriving campus. As Dr. Agwunobi said earlier today, such investment has contributed to the support and generation 5700 jobs and \$105 million in economic activity. However, beyond the economic contribution is our ability to find cures for our people and alleviate suffering. This

funding is critical to support a large Medicaid pool and many newly insured Connecticut residents. In addition to clinical care, research is an equally important part of our mission. As one example, researchers from UCONN Health were recognized by several media outlets for their discovery concerning personalized ovarian cancer vaccines. They fingerprinted DNA information from 10 women and will be make individualized vaccines for each one. This personalized medicine is the wave of the future. That wave should start here in Connecticut. Thank you.