

Good evening Chairman, senators, and representatives. My name is Savannah Hoy from Lebanon Connecticut and I am proudly representing Lebanon Regional FFA Chapter today I would like to testify regarding Bill 6824, An act concerning the State budget, and I am requesting that the appropriations committee reallocate the Governor's Budget's proposed increases for school choice programs more equitably to include 7.5 million of those increases for Agri-science programs." I am currently a senior enrolled in the Agricultural Science and Technology Center at Lyman Memorial High School, an officer in the FFA Chapter and will be entering college next year to study Wildlife Biology with a goal of becoming a Wildlife Biologist.

Choices; we make millions of them in our life time. These choices can help us reach our greatest potential, or bring us to our weakest moments. It was a choice of mine to join the FFA back in 2012, and it remains, to this day the best decision I have made thus far. I started my membership eager to gain knowledge about the agricultural industry, and as the months passed that ambition turned into a passion for agriculture. The aspect that sparked my interest the most was wildlife management and natural resources. The FFA allowed me to gain knowledge on such wildlife topics including: Entomology, Ornithology, Ichthyology, and basic wildlife Ecology. These classes inspired me to excel not only in a school setting but to also in a professional setting as well.

In the FFA it is required that a student must have a SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience). The SAE is a project that every student does to apply their knowledge of the industry to a real world application. My SAE is being employed at Ladd's Garden Center, located in South Windham, and I was responsible for the fishes' health, and without the knowledge I gained through my Ichthyology course, I could not have successfully cared for the animals. Because of the FFA I have had the opportunity to become an officer, attend the National FFA Convention to represent Connecticut in the Extemporaneous Speaking Career Development Event and learn life skills that every high school student should have the opportunity to develop.

I was one of the lucky 8th graders that was accepted into one of the 19 regional Agricultural Science and Technology Centers so I could develop my passion of agricultural, learn leadership and real world applications so that I can be successful in all of my future endeavors. By increasing the funding to the Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Centers more 8th grade students will be able to have the thrill of receiving a letter in the mail offering them into a spot at an Agricultural Center. No student that is interested in pursuing a career in agriculture should be denied a spot because there is not ample funding available.

Along with any industry, agriculture needs skilled workers who understand the needs for a profitable and successful business. The teachings through the FFA and several other Agri-Science programs we, the next generation, are prepared to face the industry head on and to resolve any issues that may arise. By making the investment in our Agri-Science programs today you are reinforcing the strength of the entire industry for tomorrow. In closing, please provide more equity by reallocating these school choice increases and give 7.5 million to our Agri-Science programs, it is not fair to our students to be forgotten about. Thank you.