



**United Way of Connecticut**

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**Testimony for the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee  
Concerning Appointment of Richard J. Porth  
To the State Education Resource Center**

**January 15, 2015**

Thank you Senator Duff, Representative Janowski, Senator Kane, Representative Buck-Taylor, and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Richard Porth and I am grateful to appear before you concerning my appointment by Governor Dannel P. Malloy as a Board member for the State Education Resource Center. Thank you for the opportunity to provide some information about my background and to express my enthusiasm to serve SERC in its important mission.

I currently serve as CEO of United Way of Connecticut. We are the state association for fifteen local United Ways. And, we work closely with a number of state agencies to provide information and access to health and human services as well as providing direct services in crisis intervention, suicide prevention, counseling, and emergency response.

United Ways in Connecticut, and across the country, are working more and more on community impact initiatives focused in three areas: education, income, and health. Our education work seeks to engage more people and resources in our communities to strengthen: school readiness, third grade-level reading proficiency, effective middle school transition, on-time high school graduation, and access to post-secondary education, training, and jobs.

In Connecticut, our United Ways have worked to strengthen early care and education in their communities for many years. Many are active in early grade reading initiatives and more are increasingly working to support post-secondary education and career advancement.

In November, Connecticut's United Ways, working with United Ways in California, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, and New Jersey released a report looking more closely at financial hardship for families that are working but still struggling financially. The report, prepared by Rutgers University, coined a new

name for this group – ALICE – Asset-Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. Our goal in issuing the report was to provide a more detailed analysis of why many working families still struggle to make ends meet to contribute toward an informed discussion on the strategies that can be most beneficial to ALICE families.

We also want to “put a face on ALICE” so that more people understand the daily struggles of ALICE families and realize that ALICE families live in every city and town in the state. ALICE can be our friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members. We believe that education strategies are an important part of the long-term solution for ALICE families.

Before coming to United Way of Connecticut, I served as Vice President for Grantmaking at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, where we funded many initiatives to help strengthen local education. And, during the nine years I worked for the twenty-nine towns in the Hartford area at the Capitol Region Council of Governments, we worked often with educators on local education issues.

Finally, while working for the City of Trenton and the State of New Jersey, I was appointed twice to serve on the Trenton Board of Education to serve a total of approximately four years. We worked hard to address many of the educational issues that continue to challenge urban school districts here and across the country.

I truly appreciate the opportunity to serve on the State Education Resource Center’s board of directors. I believe Connecticut provides good educational opportunities for most young people in our schools, and I believe we are beginning to make progress in providing good educational opportunities for people no matter where they live in Connecticut. I hope that I can help in this. Our progress will strengthen our communities and our state economy and it is the right thing to do.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share my background and my hopes in connection with the appointment to the SERC board of directors.