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QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY

**Testimony for the
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Donald J. Weinbach
Quinnipiac University
April 15, 2015**

I am submitting testimony in opposition to **HB 7037, An Act Concerning a Municipal Option to Impose an Admission Surcharge on Events Promoted by a Private Institution of Higher Education**. This bill would allow a municipality to pass an ordinance that would impose a surcharge up to fifty cents on events held within the municipality and sponsored/promoted by a private college or university. The surcharge would need to be remitted to the town within thirty days of the event.

Each year, more than 200,000 visitors to Quinnipiac University bring economic vitality to Hamden, North Haven, New Haven and beyond. Local restaurants, hotels, gasoline stations, pharmacies and convenience stores are among the businesses that benefit from this economic stimulus. Spending by visitors to Quinnipiac University also enhances the State of Connecticut's sales tax revenue, while local businesses pay local property taxes and employees pay income taxes. Thus, attracting visitors to Quinnipiac University is good for Hamden, North Haven and New Haven as it is good for other municipalities where private universities are located.

Many visitors have been attracted to Quinnipiac's York Hill campus in Hamden, home to the TD Bank Sports Center. The Center houses four NCAA Division 1 teams, men's and women's basketball and men's and women's ice hockey. During this past season, 120,000 fans attended Bobcat home games, the only regularly ticketed athletic events at Quinnipiac University. The only other ticketed events included two Acrobatics and Tumbling competitions, drawing young fans from all corners of Connecticut and throughout New England.

Our goal is to provide the community with affordable, fun family entertainment. In order to achieve this goal we keep our price points at a level that attracts many families from throughout Connecticut. We provide free parking to all fans in an effort to hold down the cost to families. Many fans are local season ticket holders, parents and families from out-of-town or individuals purchasing single game tickets. The positive economic impact on Hamden is significant and growing as businesses locate and expand in the Mt. Carmel section of town to take advantage of this visitor flow. Quinnipiac has always paid for extra duty police coverage for games at the Center, a popular assignment for Hamden's finest. In the future, this extra duty pay will be included in Quinnipiac's voluntary payment to the Town of Hamden. Just recently, President John Lahey presented a check

in the amount of \$1.23 million to Hamden Mayor Scott Jackson and Town Council President Jim Pascarella representing the University's 2014-15 payment.

While **HB 7037** attempts to provide municipalities with additional revenue, it may end up having the reverse effect. Raising prices can have an adverse impact on attendance, ultimately decreasing visitor spending in the venues cited earlier, and thus resulting in less, not more, tax revenue. We strongly urge you to reject this bill.