



## UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

**Testimony for the  
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee  
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University of Hartford  
April 15, 2015**

On behalf of the University of Hartford, a member institution of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), **I am submitting testimony in opposition to HB 7037, AAC 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 an up to fifty cent ticket surcharge on events held within the municipality and sponsored/promoted by a private college or university.

I would first direct your attention to the thoughtful testimony by Ms. Greiman of CCIC which raises a substantial number of questions concerning the bill as now written. Legislative intent and legislation should not move forward when so many obvious deficiencies, uncertainties and inconsistencies are imbedded in the legislation. Second, the very significant economic impact of private colleges and universities in the state have certainly been ignored in crafting this legislation. As I noted in earlier testimony I presented in March on behalf of the University of Hartford in opposition to HB 6965, since when have we decided that a major economic sector should be targeted with negative legislation. Is not our intent in Connecticut to cultivate sectors which create jobs, enhance our quality of life and make substantial economic contributions without needing state and local resources? This and other bills make us wonder why private higher education is being singled out. Sound and accepted fiscal theory does not take and bifurcate a key economic sector and tax one part and not the other. Private higher education in Connecticut is a proud and significant partner with public higher education and should not be fiscally and financially discriminated against.

The events at the University of Hartford that are ticketed and admission charged, and therefore, liable to be impacted by this bill, do not require any local resources to be employed or impacted. We do not call on the three towns we are in to provide police or other assistance for ticketed events – athletics, arts and other. There is no burden here from our hundreds of events each year that the towns need to be reimbursed for.

Let me offer this example of tickets sold to both the public and to the University community by our Hartt School, our performing arts group. We will sell 16,000 tickets through our Box Office for performances such as the Garmany Chamber Music series, for Hartt Collegiate performances (featuring the many hundreds of our college level students in the various programs they are studying in) and for our renowned Community Division (young people getting supplemental arts education beyond their current school or private activities). At an average of \$10 per ticket that is \$8,000 in revenue that could go to the City of Hartford. Sound tax theory and simple arithmetic would suggest that enlarging that number to include intercollegiate athletic games for which we

use tickets, and for other smaller and less frequently ticketed events will place an administrative burden on us, with no appreciable revenue accruing to the City. And yes, the City already gets millions in benefits from the University as we have outlined to the Legislature in earlier testimony. I would add, that a student performance at Hartt, for which a ticket is issued and an admission paid, is part of their educational efforts and program; how else will an acting student learn if they don't perform while in school. I am sure you would agree that classroom and performance stage elements of our process of education should not be taxed.

Please reject this legislation. Do not move forward Raised Bill No. 7037.