

Testimony in Support of House Bill Number 5798
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
February 26, 2015

Chairmen Bartolomeo and Willis, Ranking Members Witkos and Betts, and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, the House Republican Caucus would like to thank the Committee for raising **House Bill Number 5798: An Act Establishing a Tuition Waiver Program at the Regional Community-Technical Colleges for Highly Qualified High School Students.**

This bill is an important House Republican proposal, and if passed, will establish a tuition waiver program for highly-qualified students enrolled in degree programs in areas identified by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), as having a shortage of qualified employees in Connecticut. This tuition waiver will be available to any qualified student who maintains a certain grade point average at a regional community-technical college.

It is every college student's dream to graduate and find employment in a field that they have spent their lives studying and preparing for. It is, quite literally, the quintessential American Dream. All too often, students are discouraged from pursuing their dream due to lack of funding to support their college education. Passage of Proposed Bill No. 5798 could very well make those dreams come true.

The main goal behind Bill 5798 is to provide tuition waivers to highly qualified students- students who maintain a high grade point average during their enrollment at regional community technical colleges in Connecticut- and who are pursuing a degree in an area lacking good quality employees. DECD will be tasked with identifying these shortage areas, and any interested student may pursue a degree in one of these fields to be eligible for the tuition waiver. It is a hope of our Caucus to see these students graduate from our institutions of higher education, obtain gainful employment in our State, and continue to work and thrive here.

Adding highly-qualified employees to certain sectors of our workforce has been a constant struggle in our state. It is for this reason that I urge the Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement to pass Proposed Bill Number 5798, and allow certain highly-qualified students to be given a tuition waiver.