



CONNECTICUT STATE  
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

**Testimony by Estela Lopez**, Interim Provost and  
SVP for Academic and Student Affairs  
Board of Regents for Higher Education  
Before the Higher Education and Employment  
Advancement Committee  
February 26, 2015

Senators Bartolomeo and Witkos, Representatives Willis and Betts, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on ***SB 42, An Act Awarding College Credit To Volunteer Firefighters With Firefighter I Certification.***

For the record, my name is Estela Lopez, and I am the Interim Provost and Senior Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs of the Connecticut State College and University system, comprised of 17 public institutions of higher education in this state.

The Board of Regents appreciates that firefighter I certification is a rigorous and technical process that, in select community colleges around the country, is eligible for consideration of credit. However, where such programs are eligible to receive credit, it is typically because the accepting college has a degree or certificate program related to the firefighting profession. Additionally, in some cases, it is because the training provider has had their programs evaluated and recommended for specific credit amounts and in specific areas of study by an organization such as the American Council on Education. Such an evaluation would instill confidence that the training programs are rigorous, that students are appropriately evaluated, and the material presented is substantially related to an academic discipline.

Four of our community colleges: Capital, Gateway, Naugatuck Valley, and Three Rivers, have Associate's degree programs in fire science. These programs were developed to help students meet more advanced professional standards from established organizations, such as the National Fire Protection Association, the Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, and the Connecticut Fire Marshal's Training Council. However, none of these programs accepts the entry level firefighter I certification for credit. These programs do accept more advanced certifications.

The awarding of credit should only occur if the programming to be awarded is: (1) substantially aligned with work one would perform as a student at the college, (2) after a thorough evaluation of the program involved, and (3) should result in credits that are meaningful to the student – that is, they result in progress toward the completion of a program. Based on these parameters, the Board requests that the committee not pass the proposed bill.

If you have any questions regarding my testimony, please contact Kyle Thomas, Legislative Program Manager, at 860-723-0017 or [thomask@ct.edu](mailto:thomask@ct.edu).