



## Town of Fairfield

Office of the First Selectman  
Fairfield, Connecticut 06824

Michael C. Tetreau  
First Selectman

Sullivan Independence Hall  
725 Old Post Road

March 10, 2015

Senator Catherine Osten  
Representative Philip Miller  
Members of the Planning and Development Committee  
Room 2100, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

**RE: Raised H.B. No. 6965-An Act Concerning the Preservation of Municipal Tax Bases**

Dear Co-Chairs Osten, Miller, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Town of Fairfield to register my opposition to H.B. 6965, which would require colleges and hospitals to pay taxes on real and personal property purchased after 7/1/16.

The Town of Fairfield is fortunate to have two thriving universities - Fairfield University and Sacred Heart University. We have long had positive and beneficial partnerships with each institution. Both universities, which are fully integrated into our community, provide economic, cultural, safety and educational needs that not only benefit the Town, but also add to our quality of life and economic base.

Economically, students, and faculty and alumni, many of whom are residents of the Town, add to Fairfield's tax base by frequenting our many shops and restaurants. When our universities open their doors to showcase their plethora of educational forums, parents' weekend, arts, museums, concerts and so much more, they attract visitors in and out of Connecticut that help the Town's tax base by using our hotels and many other establishments. Many of our residents work at these institutions, which are among our Town's top employers.

The Fairfield University Bookstore, anchored in the heart of our downtown area, filled an empty storefront and now attracts people of all ages from the region. Fairfield University has also recently partnered with the Town and a local developer to spearhead an innovative incubator program to help small businesses launch and thrive.

Both universities offer an array of arts, athletics and cultural programs to students and residents who often dine and visit local Fairfield shops following evening shows or educational lectures.

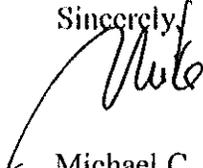
Our joint public safety efforts are illustrative of a true town-gown partnership. We are grateful to both universities for allowing us to use their campuses to park some of our emergency vehicles since the town buildings are situated in a flood zone. Fairfield's police and fire departments often collaborate with the universities on safety programs using their space, resources or faculty and have held mock disaster exercise drills at both institutions. Additionally, Fairfield University is now the Town's back-up emergency operations center. During Storm Sandy, Fairfield University supported all first responders and allowed Fairfield residents who had no power for days to charge their phones, use university computers and get meals on campus. During that same storm, Fairfield's Police Department relocated some of their emergency operation assets to Sacred Heart University to be deployed.

Both universities also provide numerous educational tools and resources to help our town employees and residents, and town departments have collaborated with both universities on projects that have saved town dollars.

In this economy, raising expenses for our universities makes these universities less competitive. This puts them at a real disadvantage when competing for students with universities located in other states and cuts down on access to higher education for needy students. We cannot afford to put our universities at a disadvantage. We need our educational institutions to continue to be a competitive advantage for our State.

Please reject this bill.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
  
Michael C. Tetreau  
First Selectman

cc: State Sen. Tony Hwang  
St. Rep. Laura Devlin  
St. Rep. Brenda Kupchick  
St. Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey