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Bishop of Bridgeport*

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*George A. Fasolo
Executive Director
1962-1992*

March 11, 2015

Senator Catherine Osten and Representative Philip Miller

Members of Planning and Development Committee

Room 2100, Legislative office Building

Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Osten and Representative Miller:

I want to speak out in support of Connecticut's not-for-profit organizations. They play a critical role in our cultural, spiritual and historical fabric; they make Connecticut the place we all love to call home. These organizations serve the public good by enhancing the health, education and general welfare of everyone in Connecticut and, as such, have been exempt from paying property tax for more than 200 years. Exemption from local property taxes provides necessary and important financial support that helps not-for-profit organizations to fulfill their missions.

I am concerned about any legislative proposal that would compel not-for-profit organizations to pay property tax. Not only would such a measure fly in the face of 200 years of history, but it would make costs go up and would negatively impact all Connecticut residents.

I believe that increasing state funding of the current PILOT program should be a shared priority of cities and towns, hospitals, colleges, legislators and the Governor. I would ask that you consider the impact that these institutions have on their local communities and on the state. For example, Sacred Heart University is a strong supporter of other nonprofits in the Bridgeport area as students, faculty and staff contribute more than 50,000 hours to [community service](#) annually, much of it locally.

Sacred Heart University's economic impact in Connecticut is a little over \$140 million, including \$51.59 million in compensation for approximately 900 employees (salary and benefits), capital and operating costs. Spending by students and visitors was nearly \$12.6 million. More than 23,000 SHU alumni are living and/or working in Connecticut who make more than \$1.4 million in earnings and pay nearly \$200,000 in tax revenues (according to the results of a 2011 study conducted by the Connecticut Independent College & University Institute for Research & Public Service).

SHU provides to the community, literacy clinics, consulting services for corporate and community partners, health and wellness programs, summer enrichment programs for low-income elementary students in Bridgeport, Upward Bound programs, the SHU-North End Partnership in Bridgeport and an award-winning NPR station. SHU also opens its doors to organizations and citizens for a wide variety of events, lectures, concerts and programs, making an invaluable contribution to the quality of life in and around the region.





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Finally, I would like to point out that Andrew Cuomo, the governor of our neighboring state of New York, has taken a totally different tack when it comes to funding education. He has consistently recognized that the SUNY, CUNY and nonprofit, independent institutions are an economic development driver of that state and has supported them through higher education-private sector partnership programs. He has also been a champion of budget investments for tuition assistance.

As legislative proposals are considered this session, I ask that you support our hospitals, colleges and all not-for-profit organizations by opposing any legislation that would alter the property tax exemption for these very important institutions in our state.

Sincerely,

Terry O'Connor

Executive Director

