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When I was making a decision about which college to attend during my senior year of high school, I had a lot of different choices. I received many offers from different schools that were both prestigious and more affordable because of the scholarships I received. However, I still chose to attend the University of Connecticut. UConn is a representation of everything there is to look forward to in Connecticut. UConn is constantly promoting innovation and leadership, and bringing individuals and ideas that value these two things to the world outside. I have truly been able to see firsthand how outstanding the academics at UConn can be. As a student of the University's Honors Program, I have had the opportunity to take classes taught by incredible professors. Honors Program classes are smaller which allows for students to participate more and get to know their professors. The Honors Program inspires students to challenge themselves while learning as much as possible about their interests. It is the responsibility of the University to be able to provide resources that make this possible. Yet this cannot be done without the required means to fund this programs. The University has already had to scale back on some of the resources available to students. Last semester I took an Honors American Studies course taught by one of the best professors I have ever had. In this course one of the many things we learned and wrote about were the painters of the Hudson River School. The database "ARTstor" was monumentally important, as through this system students in this class were able to access high-quality images and information about the artists. Using ARTstor was the nearest experience a student could have to seeing a painting in person. Recently, I found out that it was necessary to cancel UConn's subscription to ARTstor. When I found out this news I was disappointed immediately that students in other courses this semester and beyond would not be able to access this database. I realize that this is just one database of the many UConn offers to students. However, this example represents the direct impact students are *already* facing. The University and State of Connecticut must be held accountable for providing students access to the maximum amount of resources available, whether it be in an American Studies Honors course, or a STEM class. It is simply unfair to ask that students pay more for less.

I consider myself incredibly lucky to attend the University of Connecticut. As a current sophomore, I have had almost two years of life-changing experiences that will shape the career I have after graduation. However, while I am enjoying the privileges UConn offers now, I cannot help but worry for the future classes that come to UConn. There is so much potential in this State because of the University of Connecticut. My fellow classmates and future students of UConn will make up the next CEOs, state legislators, teachers, and inventors that work and live in Connecticut. This University has a tremendous effect on the future of this State's welfare both socially and financially. Our progress cannot simply be halted now while the University continues to improve. UConn attracts many smart individuals from high schools and transfer schools, and many exemplify their academic success by being a part of the Honors Program. If the funding of public higher education and UConn is not adequate for the needs of the University, then attracting the talent and diversity that UConn gains will be at stake. I recognize that there is a budget deficit, and some programs will unfortunately not gain funding. However, I implore this committee of elected state representatives to consider the invaluable asset that is a quality higher education. I ask you to think not just of STEM, but of the other many rigorous and enriching academic disciplines. An environment where we can have engineering students learning to invent new

technologies, and Honors Students in an American Studies class using ARTstor for their research papers is one that will pave the way to creating a better and stronger Connecticut.