

Good Evening,

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, I am Courtney Townshend, and I am grateful to say I am a 3rd year Medical Student at UConn.

Thank you for all of your incredible support for the University of Connecticut Health Center. Through the state investments in UConn Health, from UCONN 21st Century to Bioscience CT to your regular investments in our School of Medicine and Dental Medicine, you have made it a great university that is making a real difference to UConn students and our state.

The challenges you face in reducing the state budget deficit are daunting and I don't envy the task before you. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you and urge you to minimize the cuts to UConn Health.

The recommended budget released last week creates a gap of approximately several million dollars between the state funding and what is needed to operate UConn Health next year.

These deep cuts would reverse the progress made at UConn Health and I fear they will negatively impact my education and future as a compassionate and competent physician.

One of the reasons that I enrolled at UConn was the amazing community that the Health Center fosters among its students, and also the involvement that the school encourages in the greater Hartford community. Much of the community that exists among medical and dental students is due to concerted efforts from the administration to enact programs that allow us to bond with each other and support one another during the stressful years of our training. Your funding has made these programs possible. In addition, your funding has allowed programs such as the Student Continuity Program to exist and to enrich the education of so many medical students. I cannot overstate how much this program, which allows student to work with a physician mentor one afternoon a week for their time in medical school, had impacted me as a student. I work in a Family Medicine Practice in downtown Hartford that provides care to many underserved patients. Interacting with and learning from these patients has shaped me into an empathetic, open-minded future physician. This program has opened my eyes to many of the complex medical and social conditions faced by these patients, and has affirmed my commitment to working with underserved and marginalized populations in the state of Connecticut. I am extremely grateful for the opportunities that state funding has provided for me as a medical student, and I want to ensure that UConn medical students in the future have similar experiences. Not only are the experiences beneficial for students, but ultimately they help create more empathetic physicians dedicated to serving Connecticut's residents in need. Please do not force UConn to cut programs like these.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this evening and for your ongoing support of UConn Health. I urge you to find a way to restore these cuts so that UConn Health can continue to provide tremendous benefits to our students and patients and to Connecticut's economy.

Respectfully,
Courtney Townshend
University of Connecticut School of Medicine
Class of 2017