



Appropriations Committee

February 23, 2016

Testimony

By

Kathleen Sanner

President

University of Connecticut Professional Employees Association

Senator Bye, Rep. Walker, Senator Kane, Rep. Ziobron and distinguished members of the committee, my name is Kathleen Sanner. I am the President of the University of Connecticut Professional Employees Association, otherwise known as UCPEA.

Our collective bargaining agreement is before you today and I am here to ask for your support but before you make your decision, I would like to give you an overview of our union.

We are a union of 1870 members of the professional staff at the university. We work on the main campus and on all of the regional campuses and the law school. We represent members who are in 379 job titles with a median salary of \$67,617.

We are nurses, doctors, mental health professionals, librarians, computer specialists, dining hall managers, cultural center directors, academic advisors, administrative assistants, grant specialists, residence hall directors, admissions and financial aid specialists and have many other important job functions that make the lives of our students better and safer.

We have members in every department, school and college. Our motto is "we don't run the place, we just keep it running."

We are a predominantly female bargaining unit with 1219 women, many of whom are young mothers, some single parents, and many who are in the sandwich generation, trying to balance child care, elder care and full time employment. Make no mistake; our members realize what a great institution we work for. The fact that they voted 75.5%, in support of a collective bargaining agreement in which they gave many concessions shows how dedicated and professional our members are.

When you look at the financial piece of this collective bargaining agreement, you need to know that of the 1870 members, 1098 or 58% are on the block grant.

There are no steps in our contract; a 2% raise is, in fact, a 2% raise.

I would like to give you another example of our dedication to the university.

We, like all other state employees, gave up our raises in 2009, 2011 and 2012 and please remember, without steps those were hard zeros, affecting our future pension benefits. We made concessions to our pensions and health care as well.

Something that you may not know however is that in 2006, when the university was in some financial difficulty, our members voted overwhelmingly, to give up their raises when no other state employees were taking zeros.

We have done our part and done it willingly but are truly discouraged that we are being questioned and penalized by some for negotiating our collective bargaining agreement in good faith and reaching a fair agreement with UConn that serves us and the interests of our students well.

Please show us by your actions that we are not Wisconsin and keep collective bargaining as it should be, in our progressive state, by honoring a negotiated settlement.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. I will gladly take your questions.