

H.B. No. 5332 (RAISED) HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT. 'AN ACT CONCERNING THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM'

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My name is Dominic Yoia and I am the Associate VP, University Director of Financial Aid at Quinnipiac University. I have worked at Quinnipiac for almost 17 years and have been in the field of student financial aid for almost 30. I also have the privilege of serving on the State of Connecticut's *Task Force Concerning Outcomes Based Financing*, which is chaired by State Representative Roberta Willis and Deputy Secretary, OPM, Susan Weisselberg. Today, I'd like to testify **in support of H.B No. 5332**, An Act Concerning the Governor's Scholarship Program.

As you know, the Governor's Scholarship was created 3 years ago to replace the longstanding CICS, CAPCS and Capitol Scholarship Programs. As with any new program, it can take a few processing cycles to identify and resolve some of the administrative glitches, which this bill addresses.

I would like to highlight a few of the bill's recommendations that serve to build a better GOVS program:

1. ***Eliminate the Need-merit and Incentive Allocation portions of the GSP program so there will be ONE Need-based program.*** Maintaining 3 separate GOVS programs continues to cause confusion for students and parents, undue administrative hardship for colleges and does not change student success rates one way or the other. Consolidating these programs into one streamlines the application and administrative processes for the state, OHE, colleges and students alike.
2. ***Use prior, prior year data, like the feds, for the purpose of the formula for allocations so that institutions know at least approximately what SHARE of the funding they will receive by October 1 for the following year.*** Awarding cycles at colleges can begin as early as October 1st for students applying for admission for the following fall semester so knowing fund allocations in advance of issuing award letters is critical. Currently, colleges receive GOVS allocation letters in Mid-August, just weeks prior to the beginning of the fall semester.
3. ***Eliminate the restrictive award matrix with multiple bands created by OHE and set a single band of eligibility that sets a maximum grant award of \$4,500 with a maximum EFC of \$10,999 and allow institutions to award UP TO that amount.*** Realigning this matrix will help maintain the integrity of GOVS awards when subtle changes are made to a student's FAFSA upon verification. It also creates flexibility in allowing colleges to determine appropriate award amounts to efficiently utilize a limited pool of state funds to target more needy CT students.
4. ***Require transparency by OHE who shall publish the aggregate data, by institution, as to the number of FTE needy CT students it serves (EFC less than \$11,000) and the percentage share of the funding, by institution, that each is eligible to receive.*** Currently, GOVS allocation formulas are not clear and a college-by-college appropriations list is not available.

I believe that the recommendations noted in H.B 5332 will serve Connecticut needy students better while also helping colleges to effectively counsel students as they navigate the college application and selection process. Thank you for listening and for your support.