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TESTIMONY – Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement

Good afternoon Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Willis and all distinguished members of the Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement. On behalf of 900 public safety professionals I would like to thank you for your continued efforts and for taking the time to review testimony in support of this very important bill.

My name is Glenn Terlecki and I am the President of the Connecticut Police and Fire Union. Our Union represents State employees in law enforcement and firefighting professions. My testimony today is in **favor of Raised S.B. No. 25 “AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL POLICE FORCES ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES.”**

For many decades, there have been structured police departments at Manchester Community College, Naugatuck Valley Community College, Housatonic Community College and Capital Community College. The police officers at these campuses are highly trained and receive police officer certification through the Police Officers Standards and Training (POST) Police Academy in Meriden, CT. They have the same level of training and certification as all other police officers in the State of Connecticut.

This legislation seeks to establish special police forces on these four campuses as well as the remaining seven community college campuses. Subsection (a) of section 10a-156b of the general statutes currently includes special police forces at the University of Connecticut, UCONN Health Center and at Eastern, Central, Western and Southern Connecticut State Universities.

This bill would simply afford police officers at community colleges the same protection and statutory authority as their counterparts in the rest of the State's university system.

A security risk assessment was conducted in 2014 of each community college campus and recommended the need for armed police officers at each location. The assessment highlighted a number of potential vulnerabilities that could be deterred, prevented or at very least responded to more rapidly if campus police officers are given the proper tools to do their job. I applaud the Board of Regents for finally addressing this issue as this measure is long overdue. Safety and security is of utmost importance to the students, faculty, staff and visitors to each college campus. This legislation is a step in the right direction to improving campus safety and should not be delayed.

Thank you for your time and I encourage you to support this legislation.

Glenn Terlecki, President
Connecticut Police and Fire Union