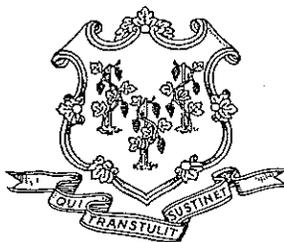


SENATOR STEPHEN T. CASSANO
Fourth District

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State of Connecticut

SENATE

Chair
Planning & Development Committee

Member
Finance, Revenue & Bonding
Program Review & Investigations Committee
Public Safety Committee
Transportation Committee

February 18, 2016

Members of the Higher Education & Employee Advancement Committee:

In 2012, Manchester Community College sought to have an armed security force on its campus.

I have taken a lead in moving legislation forward that would do just that. I am a former MCC faculty member and served as the state's first ombudsman while teaching at the college. I have a long history of serving the students, faculty and staff as well as first-hand experience dealing with the range of serious issues that face MCC students.

In 2012, then Executive Vice President of the Board of Regents, Mike Meotti, forwarded a proposal from the State Police and letters of support from six area police departments requesting that MCC campus police be armed officers who were P.O.S.T. certified. They made it clear that the MCC Police Department could not respond quickly to a shooting incident and asked to have MCC Police armed and trained to deal with such incidents.

The Manchester Police Department is nearly four miles away from the MCC campus on the opposite side of town, therefore the MPD, or any other police department, is unable to adequately patrol the campus. Area police chiefs have asked for this bill. There is no fiscal impact. In fact, this bill would save the college money as MCC must hire a courier for bank deposits, an expense which would be eliminated if this legislation passes.

Most importantly, Manchester Police Chief Mark Montminy has agreed to oversee and train the security force at MCC as well as help facilitate the purchase of necessary security items including handguns. MCC currently has POST-certified officers, many of whom are former law enforcement officers from the area. This could be a statewide model that would be easy to employ as it would require local coordination, joint trainings and ongoing communication with the regional police departments.

I ask that you support Senate Bill 25 so that the protections MCC students need and deserve will be provided. Hopefully, this will lead to a system-wide practice that will protect all of our students.

Let's be proactive and set the stage for community colleges to be adequately and professionally prepared to serve our students.

Sincerely,

Steve Cassano
State Senator
Fourth District