



21 Talcott Notch Road  
Farmington, CT 06032  
860.678.0005  
theccic.org

**Testimony for the  
Planning and Development Committee  
Jennifer Widness, President  
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges  
March 4, 2016**

On behalf of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges I am submitting testimony opposing **H.B. 5478, AN ACT CONCERNING GRANTS IN LIEU OF TAXES**, which seeks to specify that real property owned by a private nonprofit institution of higher education that is used primarily for primary and secondary education purposes shall not be eligible for a grant in lieu of taxes via the PILOT program. The bill as drafted is overly broad and will lead to inconsistent interpretation by local assessors that could result in the reduction of PILOT grants for many municipalities that host independent colleges.

As you know, the PILOT for Colleges & Hospitals grant program reimburses towns for a portion of property tax revenue foregone by virtue of hosting nonprofit colleges and hospitals. These institutions provide a benefit to the state and the regions in which they are located far beyond their host community. Due to the broad benefit these institutions provide, the grant program is intended to offset some of the burden carried by the host community for the greater good.

Institutions of higher education are natural hosts to provide educational programming for the regions that they serve, beyond just offering post-secondary coursework. They host preschools, daycares, secondary schools and magnet schools. Their property is utilized for programs that serve primary and secondary students in a variety of ways— afterschool enrichment programs, camps, sports activities and more. All of these could be considered exempt from the PILOT grant program under this bill language because they are for primary and secondary education purposes. These educational programs are extensions of the mission of these institutions of higher education and should not be separated out.

Further, we are concerned how the provision will be evaluated by local assessors. Some of the primary and secondary programs offered on campus

---

Albertus Magnus College

Connecticut College

Fairfield University

Goodwin College

Mitchell College

Quinnipiac University

Rensselaer at Hartford

Sacred Heart University

St. Vincent's College

Trinity College

University of Bridgeport

University of Hartford

University of New Haven

University of Saint Joseph

Wesleyan University

Yale University

are integrated into the educational programs offered to the students enrolled at the institutions of higher education. They serve as lab schools for education majors, training opportunities for social workers or others and provide collaborative opportunities for students in other programs. The institutions also offer opportunities to secondary students enrolled in these programs access to courses and more. It is unclear how an assessor would evaluate what program benefits “primarily” the institution or the primary or secondary students they serve.

Passage of this bill will discourage institutions of higher education from providing additional services and maximizing their capacity in supporting the state with a broader mission. For all of these reasons and more we encourage the Committee not to approve this bill.