



Testimony for the  
Appropriations Committee

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Director of Financial Aid  
Wesleyan University

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On behalf of Wesleyan University, I am submitting testimony in opposition to HB 5044, AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017, which seeks to cut and consolidate the Governor's Scholarship Program.

We are grateful for the legislature's ongoing support of our sector through maintained funding of the Governor's Scholarship Program. We understand that the state is facing very significant fiscal challenges and understand that every agency and nearly every program is facing cuts of at least 5.75%.

However, we ask that you do not cut the Governor's Scholarship Program any further. Our institution's allocation has been reduced by 60% since 2013, when the program was created. From FY15 to FY16 alone, the University has experienced a 32% cut in program funding.

Wesleyan University educates over 200 Connecticut residents. We continue to make a significant commitment to educating Connecticut residents and meeting their full financial need. We have established initiatives to eliminate or reduce the borrowing levels of our neediest students. As a result of this commitment, we are providing approximately \$3.5 million in our own grant funding to 106 needy Connecticut residents this year. We provide access and opportunity for the best and brightest students of Connecticut to remain in state. 22% of this year's entering class is receiving a Pell grant, the highest percentage in the past three years. Well over 90% of our entering students graduate from Wesleyan University, most of those in four years. The Governor's Scholarship Program is an important component to leverage the funds necessary to sustain our commitment to meeting the financial need of our students and ensuring student success.

We ask that you do not consolidate this grant program or create uncertainty by giving the Office of Higher Education (OHE) greater discretion to determine how much funding is allocated to this program.

We wish to continue serving as a partner with the state and providing low-income Connecticut students access and opportunity. Please do not adopt the Governor's recommendations to cut and consolidate this program.

Thank you for your consideration.