

State Vocational Federation of Teachers

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Testimony of Paul Angelucci
CTHSS Plumbing Department Head, Wilcox THS
Public Hearing on Secondary Education
Appropriations Committee
February 16, 2016

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and members of the committee:

My name is Paul Angelucci, and I am the Plumbing and Heating Department Head at Wilcox THS in Meriden. I am also a proud graduate of the Plumbing program at Bullard-Havens, class of 1982. As one of eight children growing up in Bridgeport, going to college was not a consideration. Learning a trade was the best avenue for me to change my economic circumstances and build a middle class life. While at Bullard-Havens, I earned two years toward my apprenticeship. A couple of years later, while many of my friends were still in college, I was a licensed plumber. I was successful enough raise my family in the home I built in Trumbull, living a life that would have been unattainable for me had I gone to any other school system. In 2007, I felt called to give back to the system that gave so much to my family and me. Today, I work with young people in Meriden, many of them from difficult backgrounds, who are developing the skills that can help them change their lives. These young people will also provide Connecticut businesses with the educated and skilled workforce they need.

No one questions the importance of the CTHSS; however, that value is not always reflected in the budget. As Governor Malloy presented the budget in the State of the State address, he said that school district contributions are not being cut. While we can disagree if that is true anywhere, it is clearly not true of the CTHSS. Our system has faced cuts already this year, and our budget has already been reduced by over \$1.5 million from what the legislature had approved last year. Further reductions are even more likely if our budget is no longer in a CTHSS line item, but buried in the Department of Education budget. These cuts should not be viewed as savings; they are classes of students without teachers, they are supply shortages, they are buildings without maintainers. My supply budget today is less than it as when I was a student in 1982, without adjusting for inflation. I am asking you today to keep the CTHSS as its own budgetary line item and maintain the funding level that was approved last year. I want my students today to have the same opportunity for success I had when I graduated 35 years ago.

Thank you.