



University of Connecticut
School of Engineering

Computer Science &
Engineering

Thomas J. Peters, Ph.D.
Professor of Computer Science
Professor of Mathematics

March 3, 2017

Dear Members of the Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement,

Regarding: Raised Bill 971;

An Act Concerning the Promotion of Transfer and Articulation Agreements.

I respectfully appreciate the good intentions of Bill 971, while arguing strongly against it. Its elegant simplicity of statement belies a myriad of unintended consequences.

As an analogy, consider a similarly elegantly simple tax bill:

Each tax payer will annually pay 5% of that payer's federal tax payment as income tax to the Connecticut General Fund.

Indeed, similar proposals were raised when Connecticut's income tax was enacted. You are much more aware than I of why such a simple proposal was rejected.

Similarly, with Raised Bill 971, consider three crucial issues:

1. The Connecticut Institutions of Higher Education were founded with distinctly different missions and have appropriately distinct accreditation bodies. Those accreditation reviews have strict criteria. A legislated change for a common core could risk future accreditations by integrative changes to key courses. This could endanger the value of the degrees at all these institutions, whereby this bill would hurt the ones it is designed to help – the students.
2. Degree programs have specialized pre-requisites not offered at all campuses. I will speak from experience in the UConn College of Engineering. Our students enjoy very high job placement, which is under your purview. If an engineering student does not complete a specialized computing course during the first year, then time to graduation can easily be delayed by a year. These courses rely heavily upon the expertise of specialized faculty, where that expertise is not present at all higher education campuses. Other majors likely have similar constraints.
3. It is an unfunded mandate. The curriculum to support degrees relies heavily on faculty expertise. Consideration of a common core would require significant faculty time, taking them away from other educational responsibilities – with no guarantee of success. There are no resources for this. Consider a different well-intentioned inter-agency mandate: *A universal form for all requests to all state agencies*. Again, you are well aware of the effort that would entail, which is a compelling reason to not consider it. Similarly, here, please do not underestimate the effort and expertise required for a common core.

Please reject this Bill 971.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas J. Peters".

Thomas J. Peters, Ph.D.
Professor of Computer Science & Engineering
Professor of Mathematics
University of Connecticut