

Written testimony to the Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly, 21 February 2017

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OPPOSE House Bill 5552
An Act Excluding Pension Agreements from collective Bargaining Agreements for State and Municipal Employees
& All Other Attacks on Public Employee Collective Bargaining

To the Honorable Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

If we wish to maintain and improve the academic excellence and prestige of the University of Connecticut, we must attract and retain the best possible faculty.

As a tenure-track faculty member at the University of Connecticut, I know that superior healthcare and pension benefits help attract and retain the best possible faculty. The protection of academic freedom and collective bargaining rights by the faculty union helps attract and retain the best possible faculty. And, in a feedback loop that can either improve the university over time or drag it down, the best possible faculty are attracted and retained by UConn's academic excellence and prestige, and in turn they further that standing and reputation.

Before I was hired in 2013, my future colleagues asked me, "Why do you want to come to UConn?" a question motivated in part by the options afforded me by my Ivy League background. I told them then, as I tell the Committee now, that superior healthcare and pension benefits and the empowerment of having a faculty union are among the key reasons I hope to remain at UConn throughout my academic career. Another is its status as a well-respected and high-achieving flagship public university. I am committed to making my career in public higher education, and at UConn I can do so with top-notch colleagues and students. However, if our benefits were slashed and our bargaining rights reduced, a degradation of the university as a whole would follow, including the loss of the best students and faculty members.

I urge you to protect the University of Connecticut, as well as our state's services and economy as a whole, by voting against H.B. 5552. Thank you.