

February 12, 2018

*Testimony of William Lugo, Chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents and Professor of Sociology and Criminology at Eastern Connecticut State University*

*Dear Members of the committee:*

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to talk today. My name is William Lugo. I am chair of the Faculty Advisor Committee to the Board of Regents and Professor of Sociology and Criminology at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Our higher education system is at a crossroads- not just in terms of financing, but also in terms of who we are as institutions. First, we continue to be plagued by a vicious cycle- brain drain and declining enrollments – two forces which are not entirely unrelated. As these forces take hold of our state, we continue to lose our best and brightest to other parts of the country. This has left our system of public higher education reeling.

We continue to talk of working smarter, not just harder, finding efficiencies wherever possible, and most importantly to think outside the box in this “new economic reality.” We now have that opportunity. In front of you today, and in classrooms across our state, there is a population of students ready to put forth the effort, ready to graduate and contribute to our struggling economy. All they need is the opportunity.

I have had the opportunity to discuss this bill with faculty and administrators throughout our system and all have agreed that passing it would be in the best interests of our students, institutions, and the state of Connecticut. In the end, it would improve the academic reputations of our systems of higher education, as well as contribute to the economic recovery of our state. Therefore, I fully support HB 5031.

Thank you for your time.

William Lugo, PhD