My name is Andrew Pilkons, I am from Vernon, and I am a student at Central Connecticut State University studying Chemistry. I am also an At Large Senator on CCSU’s Student Government Association. I am here to address the legislature about Connecticut’s budget to the CSCU system as well as the proposed textbook tax.

A bit of a background about myself, I am a transfer student at CCSU, before transferring I had gone to both a private university, and a community college. Without a doubt though in my mind, CCSU has given me the most valuable education I have ever received. I have learned substantial lessons in civic engagement, leadership, diversity, and activism while being taught by some of the most dedicated professors this state has to offer.

I and thousands of other students are only able to take in what this university and other public state colleges and universities have to offer because it is affordable. Students of diverse backgrounds attend our public universities and make substantial sacrifices to do so, but by raising already high tuition prices and taxing already expensive textbooks, this state risks not giving a chance to students who do not come from advantaged backgrounds to succeed.

This is unacceptable, this state needs to give the chance to succeed to everyone. This should not just be for the sake of students, but for the sake of this state. When students of all backgrounds succeed in our state colleges and universities, they will succeed in this state and be the valuable citizens we need. I hope you all will oppose taxing textbooks and will not raise tuition for universities in the CSCU system.

Thank you, and I hope you all will consider the welfare of students when considering legislation and the budget.