Kassandra Fruin

Involvement: President of the CCSU Student Government Association

"It is proven that children of addicts are doomed to become addicts themselves. Children and young adults like myself have the odds stacked against them; pushing us to surrender to our chaotic upbringing. I shared this same sentiment last year to you to put into perspective a common story in Connecticut. My story is one of the many that illustrates the struggles of a young person trying to overcome their upbringing – a person who has come from a low-income household and with a family that has fallen into the Opioid Crisis.

In my situation, I did not want to become another statistic. Taking the step to go to college was not simple, and each day I am faced with the reality that one of the only ways I can afford my way through my degree is, once again, fighting to keep tuition low.

Two years ago, a week before my 2nd semester of my sophomore year, my mother died unexpectedly from an accidental overdose. She had been battling mental health issues and addiction longer than I could remember, but she was still my mom. My heart broke and I was forced to become an independent adult at 19 years old; my only home being the room I resided in on campus. Wiping away the small contribution my mother was able to handle, all of my college and living expenses were now in my hands.

If it wasn’t for CCSU having the lowest tuition of the CSU schools, if it wasn’t for the support of my financial aid office, if it wasn’t for the guidance provided to me from the administration and staff at CCSU – I would not be here today. In fact, I am not sure where my life would be at this very moment. I predict that I would have fallen to another statistic.

That is why I am testifying again, another year later. I am the voice of students who did not get the future they deserved because they could not afford it. Without an affordable education, children and young adults like myself would not have easier avenues to flourish within today's society. I believe that without the access to affordable higher education I would not be the person I am today; a young adult capable of making a life for herself and defeated all odds. Without higher education and CCSU, I would not have a place to truly call my home and place where I was accepted regardless of my background.

I hope the Appropriations Committee thinks of students AND perspective students like myself who just want a chance, and can make a better life for themselves through their education.

Thank you for your time."