Testimony of Rebecca DelValle before the Appropriations Committee

March 7, 2019

Hello, my name is Rebecca DelValle. I am a proud student at Housatonic Community College and I look forward to graduating this May from HCC.

I am honored to share with you what my experience has been in college – and how it has impacted the lives of our six children. (Our children have seen the outcome of our hardwork and possibilities that come from that hard work. We are finally starting to see a light at the end of a very long tunnel and have shown our children that when you put your mind and effort into something, the possibilities are endless.) My husband has also been at HCC --- and together we will boldly walk across the graduation stage in the Spring.

I am graduating with a major in Small business management with a concentration in Entrepreneurship, and can speak to you tonight about what a difference it makes in the lives of students when they meet regularly with Academic Advisors and Workforce Coaches on
campus. For me...this has changed my earning potential for the rest of my life --- and I share all of this with our kids --- the next generation of Connecticut workers.

On campus, I learned about a program called the Family Economic Security Program (FESP). In order to participate you have to have taken some college classes and hold down a part-time job. As a busy mother you can imagine what I was thinking in the beginning --- would this be the right place for me to invest my time – would any tradeoffs away from my children be worth it? Well I am here to tell you IT IS SO WORTHWHILE. I will not be graduating with College debt due to the various financial literacy classes I have taken --- and my confidence has grown significantly as a student and as a member of the Greater Bridgeport community. There are many parts of this program that have been funded from the Fairfield County's Community Foundation --- but I am here before you to say the life changing actions of Counselors and
Advisors in guiding me through this educational journey has been transformative.

As legislators, I understand that you are faced with many difficult choices about what has value for students --- please know that investing in this type of staffing on our community college campuses --- by funding more Advisors and Counselors will make so many more students like me get to the successful finish line and become even more productive citizens of Connecticut.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share my story with you.