Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representatives DiMassa and Horn, and members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Christopher Connolly, a first year undergraduate student at the University of Connecticut. I am studying finance at the university's School of Business, one of the top public business schools in the nation. I am writing to testify on the Budget Hearing for Higher Education.

My main talking point is about how the University of Connecticut has worked hard over the past few years to become one of the premier public schools in the nation. Given the great level of education, it is commonly ranked as a top 25 institution in this category. As our rankings and academics increase, prestige associated with the university increases as well. Ultimately, wouldn’t state representatives want the University of Connecticut to be one of the best public schools rather than “just another state school”? As a current student, I am proud to declare that I attend the University of Connecticut. I received acceptances from many other prestigious institutions, both public and private, but my decision to attend the University of Connecticut was dependent on the school’s great academics. Out of state and international students are also drawn to the University of Connecticut because of the great education and growing prestige. Our rankings and education itself will fall dramatically with yet another budget cut. Pulling funding from the university will only send us backwards. Teachers will be less inclined to work as hard, thus lowering achievement and morale. The university will no longer have the same great academics with another budget cut.

Aside from academics, amenities will fall short of modern standards with a budget cut. Currently, our standards of living are reasonable, but us students cannot afford much less. The majority of on campus housing does not feature air conditioning or spacious rooms. This can make it very uncomfortable in the warmer months when temperatures rise upwards of ninety degrees fahrenheit. I speak from experience when I say this makes it difficult to focus and study. If anything, these conditions should be improved, not worsened; additional finances are needed in the university’s amenities and what we have definitely should not be taken away. Prospective students want to see comfortable and modern living conditions, which the university has provided more of in recent years, but a budget cut will not help this cause.

I myself am a large sports fan, and I strongly feel our athletic department would suffer detrimentally from a budget cut. As one of the many fans of our nationally regarded basketball teams, I love the sense of camaraderie and togetherness sports provide for our school and greater community. If funds were to be diminished, high school prospects would be scared away from attending the university, which is the last thing we need. Sports provide a great source of revenue for the school and are a platform for a diverse group of people to unite behind a common cause. Athletics and the school in general would suffer incredibly from a financial cutback.
In general, the University of Connecticut would lose a lot from yet another budget cut. The University of Connecticut is a valuable asset to the state and has made wonderful things happen with our past budgets, and and I strongly encourage you to continue this generosity in your vote for the next budget.

Sincerely,
Christopher Connolly
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