



## SB 1026

### An Act Establishing Certain Incentives to Grow the Bioscience Industry in the State

#### Commerce Committee Public Hearing

March 12, 2019

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Ranking Members and Members of the Commerce Committee, we thank you for allowing us the opportunity to present testimony **in support of Senate Bill 1026**. This bill makes a number of changes to state statutes to support the growth of the bioscience industry in Connecticut.

The University of Connecticut is one of the top public research universities in the country with state-of-the-art facilities and growing academic strength. UConn has very strong academic programs in molecular biology, cell biology, physiology, neurosciences, biomedical engineering, immunology, pharmacology, medicine, biomedical science, computer sciences, data analytics, blockchain, and mHealth.

UConn provides access to what might be otherwise unattainable resources for inventors and startups including cutting edge research facilities and top talent that can only be found at a Research 1 university. Among its many assets are the services and expertise provided through the Technology Incubation Program, Core Scientific Facilities, Cores and Institutes. All of these resources support innovative research and commercialization activities, workforce development through education, student research and innovation. We are excited to be a key contributor to the Bioscience Ecosystem in the state.

The State of Connecticut has made tremendous investments in the bioscience industry, including passing the bold *Bioscience Connecticut* initiative in 2011. *Bioscience Connecticut* made strategic investments in UConn Health and the region to generate long-term, sustainable economic growth based on bioscience research, innovation, entrepreneurship and commercialization. This initiative has successfully positioned the region and the State to be a Bioscience powerhouse, and has already been paying dividends. The State should continue this forward progress.

Through the *Bioscience Connecticut* investments, UConn Health has expanded its Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine to graduate more doctors, dentists and scientists to ensure Connecticut's **healthcare and research workforce** of the future; has expanded its

technology incubation facilities to **support and grow biotech and bioscience start-up companies** in our state; and has renovated its laboratories to support cutting-edge, innovative, collaborative research, to help **recruit and retain renowned scientists**, and to grow external grant funding (which support more jobs, and spending) coming into Connecticut.

**UConn Health's Technology Incubation Program (TIP)** has been highly successful since *Bioscience Connecticut* allowed for its expansion in 2015; indeed, other entities are looking to model their technology incubation centers after it. At the close of Calendar Year 2018, UConn Health's TIP had 30 start-ups on site, and a waiting list of companies seeking space. These companies garnered \$97 million in debt and equity, \$13 million in grants and revenues, employed over 140 full and part-time employees and paid nearly \$1 million in taxes to the State. These companies are creating an ecosystem of Bioscience knowledge and commercialization in the State that is growing.

**UConn Health's partnership with The Jackson Laboratory** is also growing and deepening. It includes collaborative hiring of 5 Joint UConn-JAX faculty members, and 22 JAX scientists with faculty appointments at UConn. We have shared investments with JAX in high-tech research equipment that would be difficult for each of us separately to fund, and that makes us more competitive to win grant funding. So far, UConn and JAX have jointly applied for \$108m in grant funding, \$33m of which has already been awarded.

Connecticut should continue to build on the strategic investments that it has made in this sector in order to keep the momentum going and to leverage and promote Connecticut's existing strengths and assets to ensure that we remain in the forefront as this industry develops and evolves.

We urge the Committee to support SB 1026, and thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments.