

**Testimony for the Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee on
HB 7408: An Act Concerning Municipal Revenue and Stormwater Authority,
Studies of the PILOT Grants Program and a Property Tax Exemption for
Machinery and Equipment and Enterprise Zone
April 10, 2019**

Quinnipiac University appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony on **HB 7408: An Act Concerning Municipal Revenue and Stormwater Authority, Studies of the PILOT Grants Program and a Property Tax Exemption for Machinery and Equipment and Enterprise Zone**. We strongly oppose section 6 of this bill which seeks to authorize the legislative body of a municipality to establish a municipal public safety and infrastructure benefit charge to be levied on non-profit entities that own tax exempt property.

If enacted, Quinnipiac University would be adversely and seriously impacted. A fee such as one proposed would prevent Quinnipiac University and others from fulfilling its core mission to educate students for productive and meaningful careers of the 21st century. We would be required to pass the costs of this fee on to students and their families', putting further pressure on their ability to pay for a college education.

Quinnipiac's use of local police and fire is limited. There were nine 911 calls placed from Quinnipiac to the Town of North Haven in 2018 and three in 2019 so far. Hamden police received seventy-four 911 calls in 2018. This is equivalent to one call every 4 or 5 days.

Additionally, the University pays for its routine police duty as well as any overtime needed. In 2015, the State of Connecticut enacted legislation that allows municipalities to collect property taxes on properties used for off-campus student housing. Thus, off-campus houses owned by the University and occupied by full-time undergraduate students are now taxed by local governments.

In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, Quinnipiac allocated \$1.5 million to the Town of Hamden and \$700,000 to the Town of North Haven. Both amounts include newly instituted property taxes, direct payments for police, fire and EMT services and voluntary contributions. Quinnipiac is one of only two universities in the State of Connecticut to give significant voluntary contributions to host towns.

Currently and very importantly, we are in the process of creating a sworn hybrid force to include both sworn and unsworn public safety officers. The primary goal is to make our campuses safer for students, faculty, staff and community members, as this will allow sworn officers to receive and respond to emergency calls. Presently, if a student calls 911, our campus public safety (non-sworn) officers are not notified of those calls. In addition, moving to a hybrid force will reduce the university's reliance on local fire and police resources.

Quinnipiac University is the Town of Hamden's largest private employer with more than 1,200 full-time employees. In North Haven, 350 full-time Quinnipiac employees have been added to its workforce. Our employees, students, prospective students, parents, visitors to cultural events, athletic fans and others are highly valued consumers. Quinnipiac draws an estimated 500,000 visitors each year. This activity stimulates much needed and desired economic activity.

Quinnipiac is a proud community partner and appreciates the opportunity to work together with municipal leaders and community groups in Hamden and North Haven to enhance and improve upon the quality of life that is enjoyed. These partnerships are providing immeasurable social, aesthetic and economic benefits.

Quinnipiac gives back to its neighboring communities in many ways. Included in this letter is a small sampling of some of our outreach contributions.

- For more than 25 years and continuing into the present, Quinnipiac has hosted the CT Science and Engineering Fair. This year, the event was held on March 11-16, 2019. Over 1,000 faculty, staff, and middle and high school students attend this event. This statewide science and engineering fair is open to all 7th through 12th grade students residing or enrolled in Connecticut schools and Fisher's Island. An important objective of our program is to attract young people to careers in science and engineering while developing skills essential to critical thinking.
- For the past ten years, our University has hosted The Big Event -Day of Service. This is one of the largest events held at Quinnipiac. Hundreds of members of the University community come together, including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff and alumni, to give back to the surrounding communities through a variety of different service-

oriented projects. This year this event was held on April 6, 2019 and hosted over 1500 volunteers assisting 87 non-profit organizations.

- Veterans' Awareness Day, which we have hosted for nearly 20 years, is an event that Quinnipiac co-sponsors with the Town of Hamden and Hamden Public Schools and funds completely. Approximately 500-700 Hamden Middle School students and 100 veterans or associated veterans' groups participate in this event to learn about veterans' experiences serving in the armed forces.
- Hamden Police Annual Memorial Weekend Classic Car Show, which was hosted on May 26, 2019 this year, is another event Quinnipiac has hosted for more than 20 years for the benefit of the region. The show attracts 3,000 to 4,000 visitors and enables the CT Classic Chevy Club and the Hamden Police Department to raise funds that are distributed to a variety of charities, many of them local.
- For the past four years, on the North Haven Campus, Quinnipiac has hosted the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce Annual Legislative Breakfast. At this event, approximately 300 people attend to learn of the new CT Legislative agenda and to discuss legislative recommendations adopted by the Chamber and its regional partners. In addition, Quinnipiac supports the Hamden Chamber of Commerce with membership and as a sponsor of events.
- QTHON's Miracle Network Dance Marathon occurred on March 23rd. The fundraising efforts for QTHON 2019 totaled \$332,000. As QU's eighth year comes to a close, QTHON has raised more than \$1,000,000 for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center.
- Recently, our engineering students welcomed fifty local Girl Scouts to campus for a Hackathon where the attendees learned about mobile phone technology and the coding skills required to develop it.

Our students are engaged in the community. Quinnipiac University education students serve as student teachers in the Hamden Public schools. Quinnipiac sponsors the President's Public Service Fellowship summer program that provides opportunities for top students to work as interns in Hamden government offices. In addition, the University offers 12 half-tuition scholarships to Hamden students. In 2016-17, student organizations raised \$750,000 for philanthropic causes.

Quinnipiac supports the Town by providing off-site training access for CT State and Hamden Police to train on property. As a final example, our law and business students offer free income tax preparation services at a series of sessions organized by the University's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. In recent years, the State of Connecticut has reduced significantly financial aid and other student scholarships of the Roberta Willis Scholarship program. This program funds students in need, not institutions. Reducing this funding has already directly impact students from low and middle-income families. At the same time, Quinnipiac continues to supplement with private and extensive fundraising activity.

For these reasons and more, we strongly urge you not to move this legislation forward. Thank you.