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**State of Connecticut**  
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**RANKING MEMBER – PUBLIC SAFETY  
& SECURITY COMMITTEE**

**MEMBER – TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

Written Testimony of: State Senator Tony Hwang, 28th District  
To: The Legislature's Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee  
In Support of: SB 26 - ***AN ACT CONCERNING PROGRAM APPROVAL AT INDEPENDENT  
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION***

Co-Chairs Haskell & Haddad, Vice-Chairs Turco & Flexer, Ranking Member Hall, and fellow Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 26. As a member of the Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee I cannot testify in person, but would like to submit the following for the record.

Connecticut is one of the few states that requires some institutions of higher education to submit new curricula for program approval to the Office of Higher Education (OHE), and in order to be competitive for talent with our neighbors and respond appropriately to the needs of Connecticut businesses, I stand in strong support of SB 26.

Most independent institutions of higher education in this state are currently operating under a moratorium that exempts up to twelve new courses from the approval process of the OHE. Last year, representatives from those exempt institutions testified that the moratorium has greatly increased their ability to respond to changing needs of businesses and changing interests of their students. Allowing them to work quickly, under their own rigorous standards of program approval should be the norm, rather than the exception.

Fostering the success of Connecticut businesses is the key to Connecticut's comeback, and businesses need a talent pool that is trained in the skills they need. If we continue to require all these independent schools to go through the OHE in order to offer new programs and curricula, Connecticut colleges will lose applicants who want to go to a school that already offers those courses because that school did not need to go through an exhaustive government review.

Let's encourage our colleges and universities to be pioneers, and to work closely with the business sector to create the programs that today's graduates need to be successful. Let's pass this bill and level the playing field with other states. Thank you for your consideration.