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**Testimony for the
Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee
Jennifer Widness, President
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
February 28, 2019**

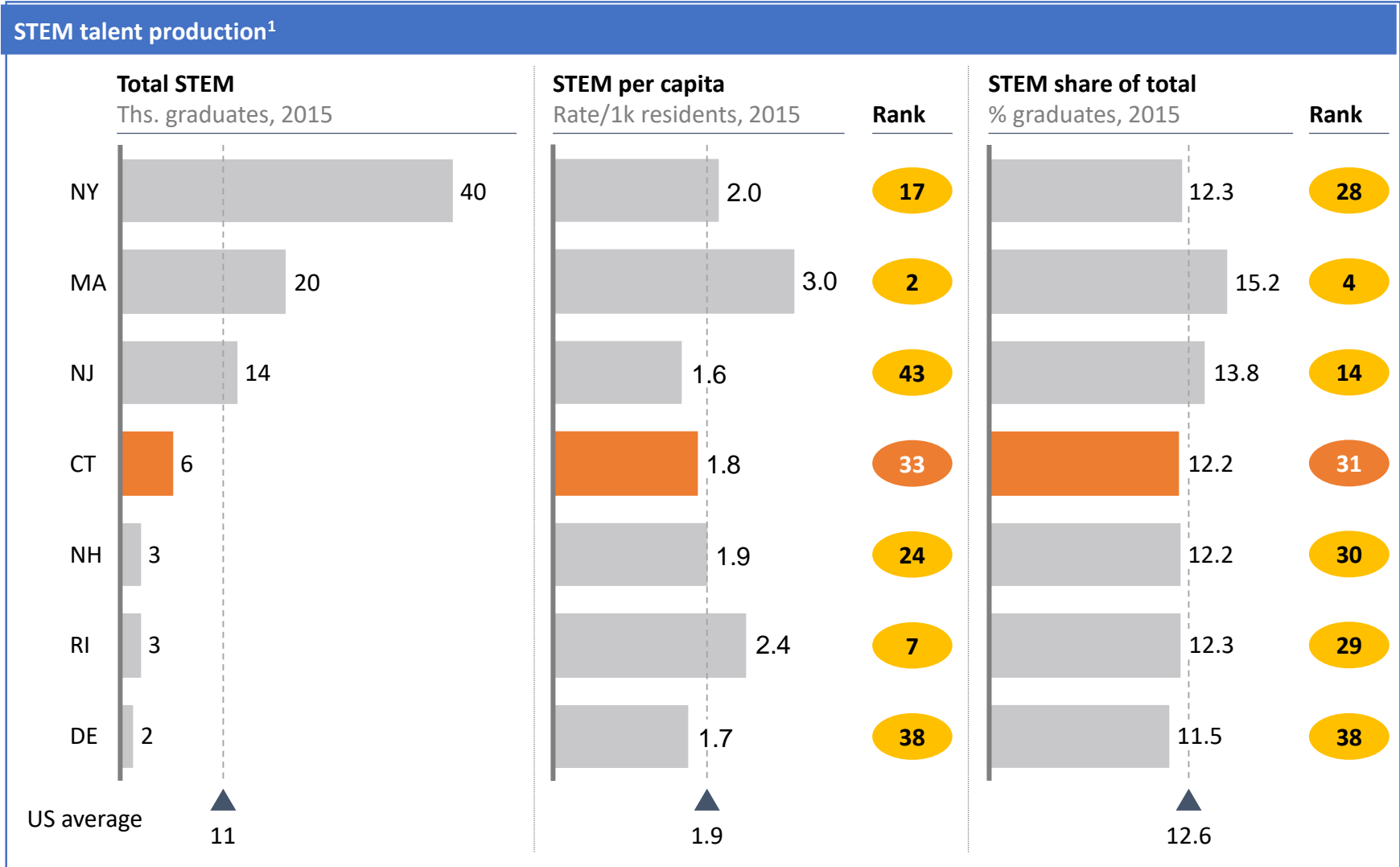
CCIC applauds the Committee for raising **SB 274, An Act Requiring the Establishment of the Learn Here, Live Here Program, SB 435, An Act Establishing a Tax Credit for Employers Making Education Loan Payments for Employees** and **SB 865, An Act Concerning No or Low Interest Student Loans for Certain Students**, all of which are intended to help the state retain talent and ensure we have the workforce necessary to meet the needs of our state's employers.

Connecticut has long been known as having one of the most well-educated workforces in the country, with nearly 50% of our residents holding an associate's degree or higher. It is one of our greatest assets. However, projections included in our state's Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education indicate that by 2025 Connecticut's economy will require a workforce in which 70% will have some education beyond high school. Hitting that 70% target will require production of 300,000 more graduates than the current rates of production will yield.

In addition, Connecticut lags in degree production compared to our neighboring states in certain key areas of economic growth – specifically computer science and engineering (Figures 1-4). We also know there is room for growth in keeping more of our high-school students here for college (Figure 5), as well as upon graduation (Figure 6-8).

The Committee's focus on policy in these areas is critical and the independent colleges of Connecticut look forward to working with members of this committee to help identify targeted solutions to address this challenge.

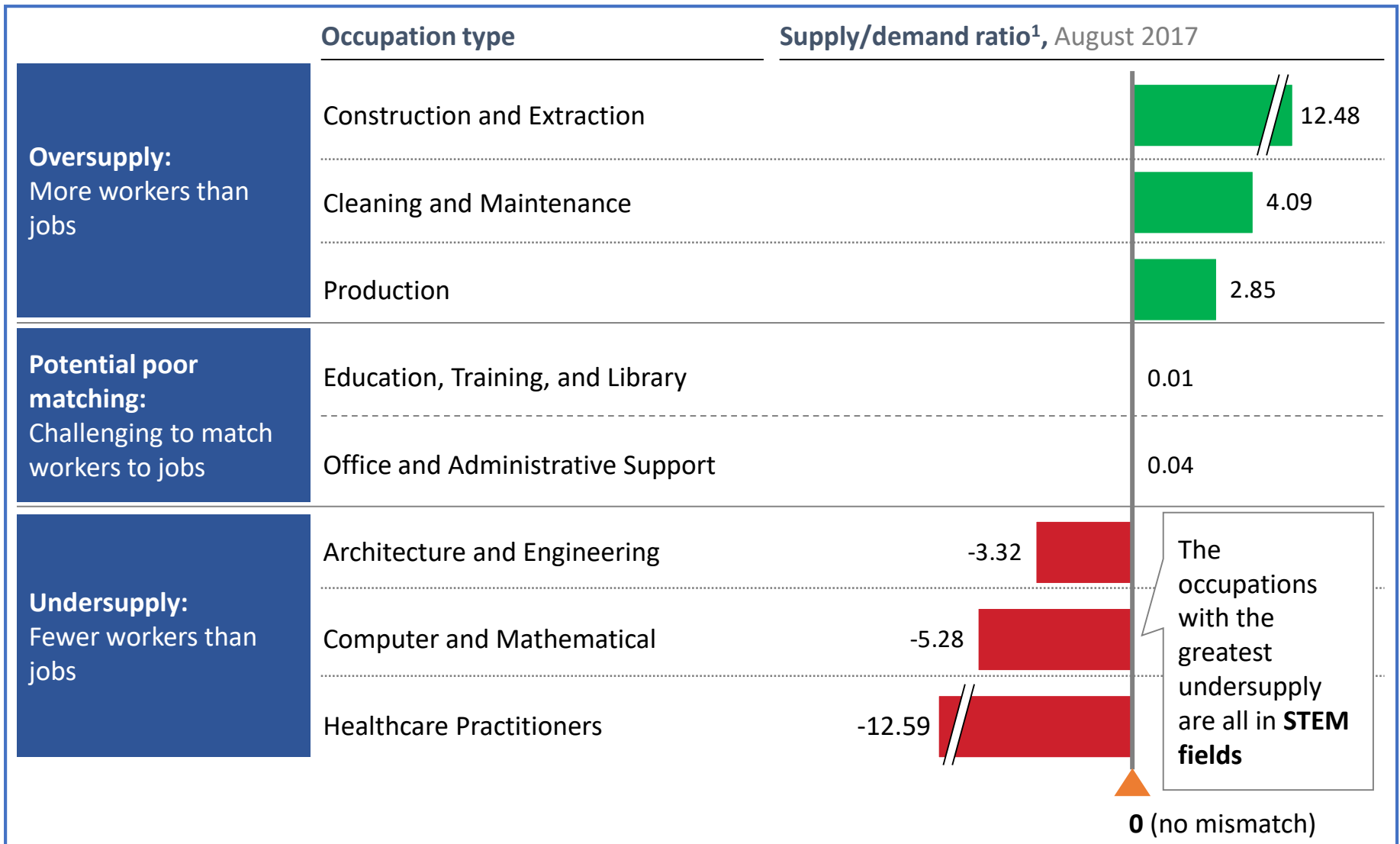
Connecticut Lags its Neighbors in STEM Talent Production



¹ Graduates of 2 year/certificate programs or higher; STEM includes CIP codes 11, 14, 15, 26, 27, 40, and 41

SOURCE: SOURCE: CT Commission on Fiscal Stability & Economic Growth via National Center for Education Statistics

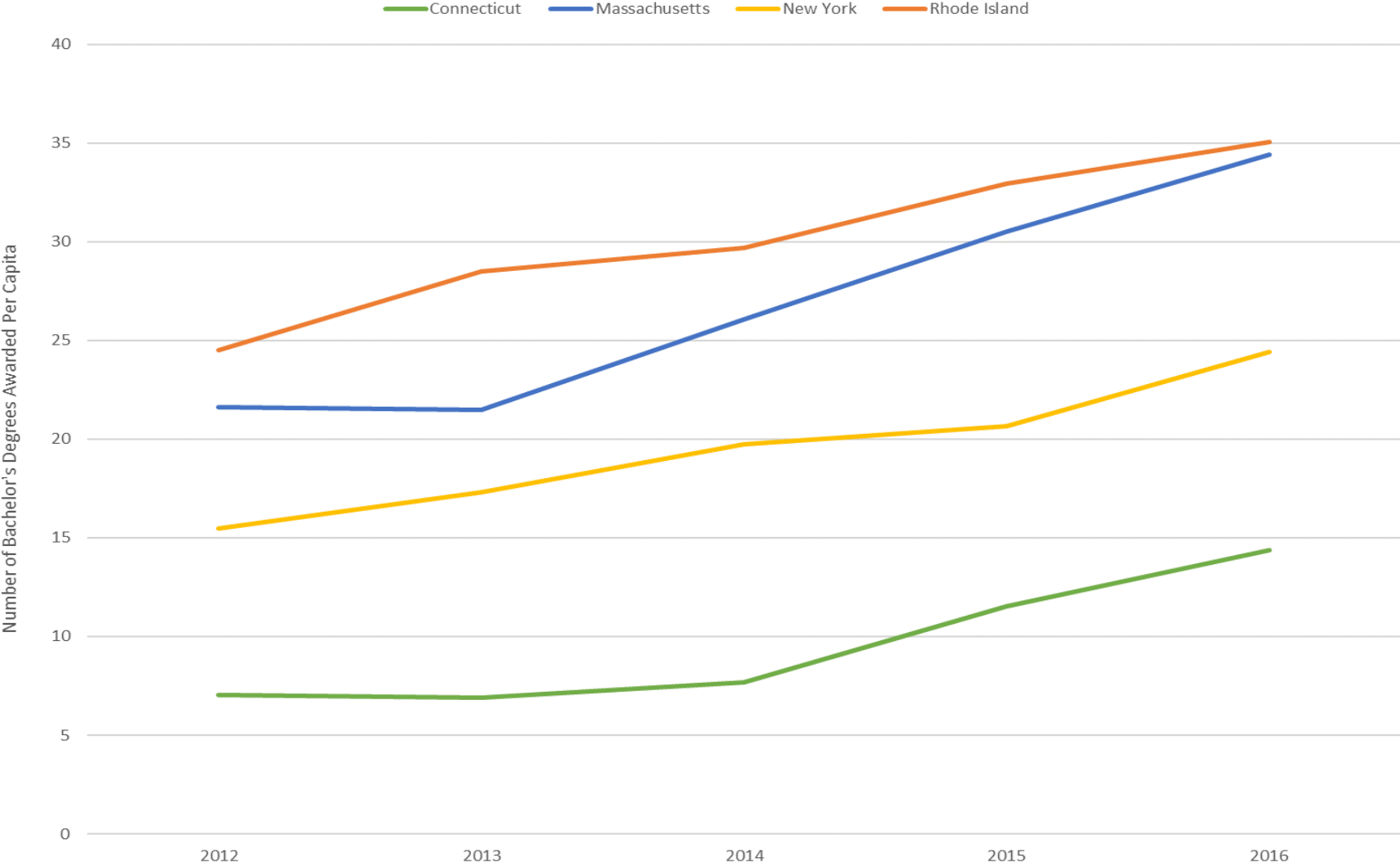
Connecticut Suffers from an Undersupply of STEM Degrees in the Labor Market



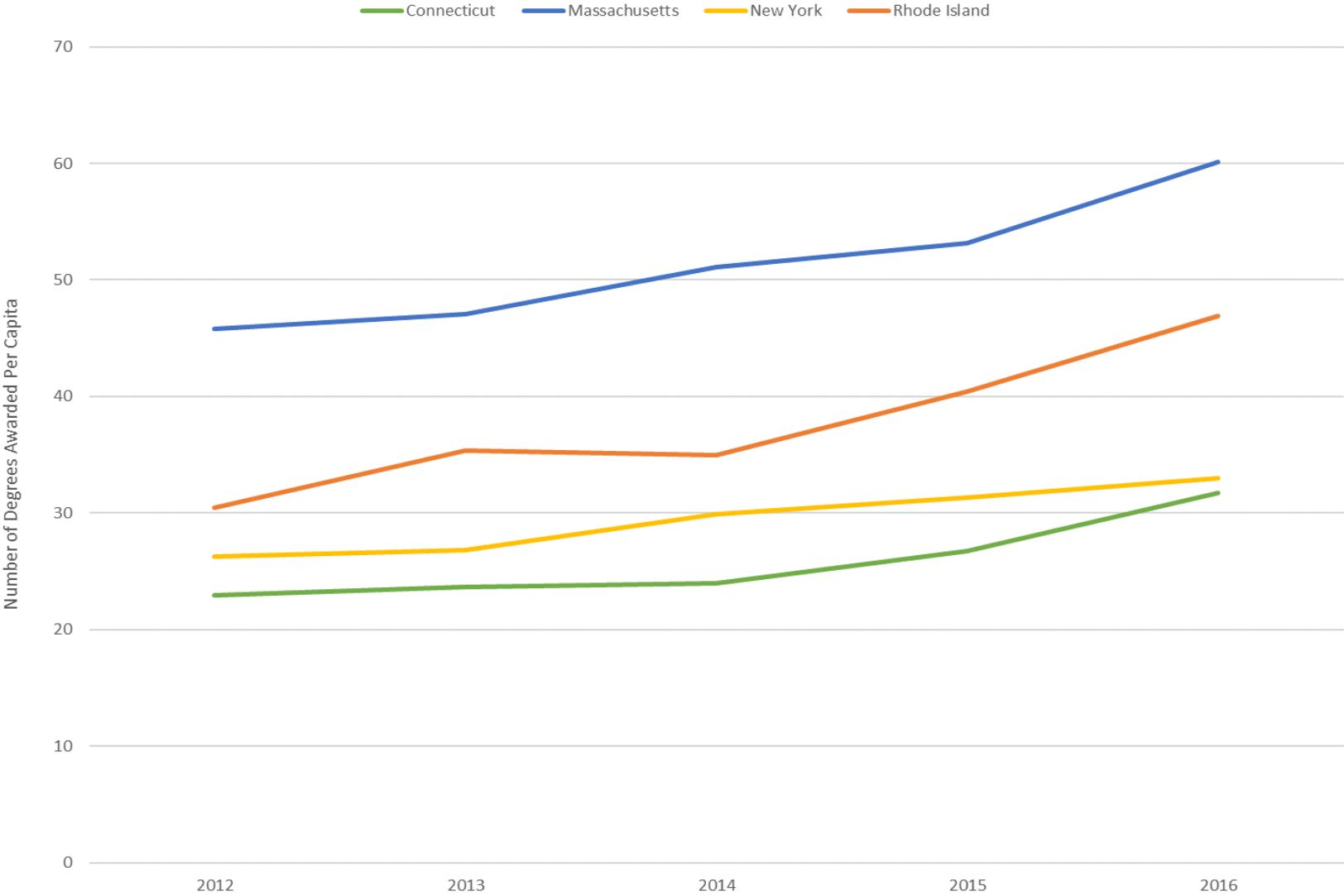
¹ Measured as the ratio of unemployed individuals in a given profession to open job postings in that profession

SOURCE: CT Commission on Fiscal Stability & Economic Growth via EMSI and BLS data

Trends of Computer Science Bachelor's Degrees Awarded Per Capita by State

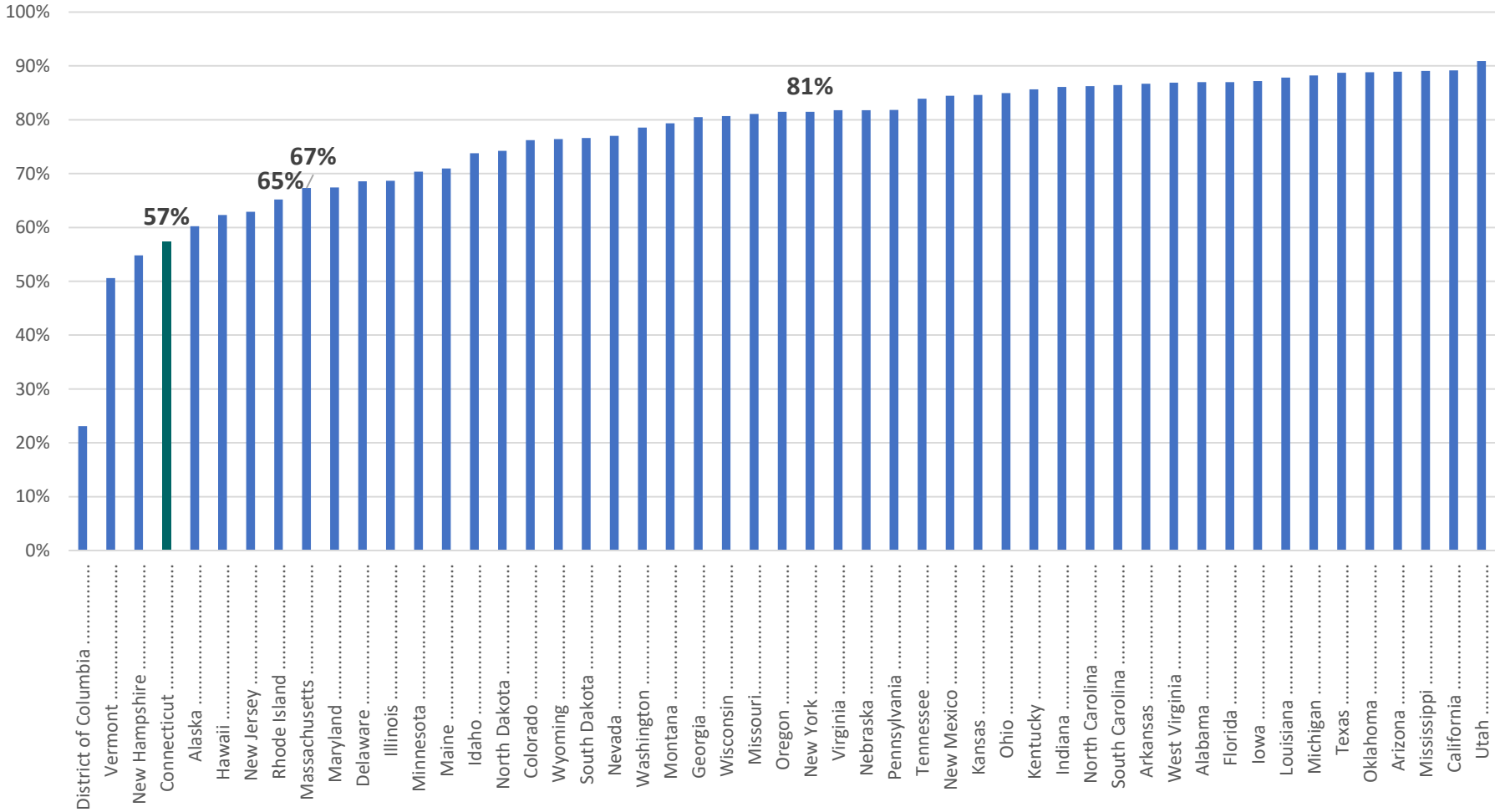


Trends of Engineering Bachelor's Degrees Awarded Per Capita by State



Percent of all first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates that enrolled at in-state institutions: Fall 2016

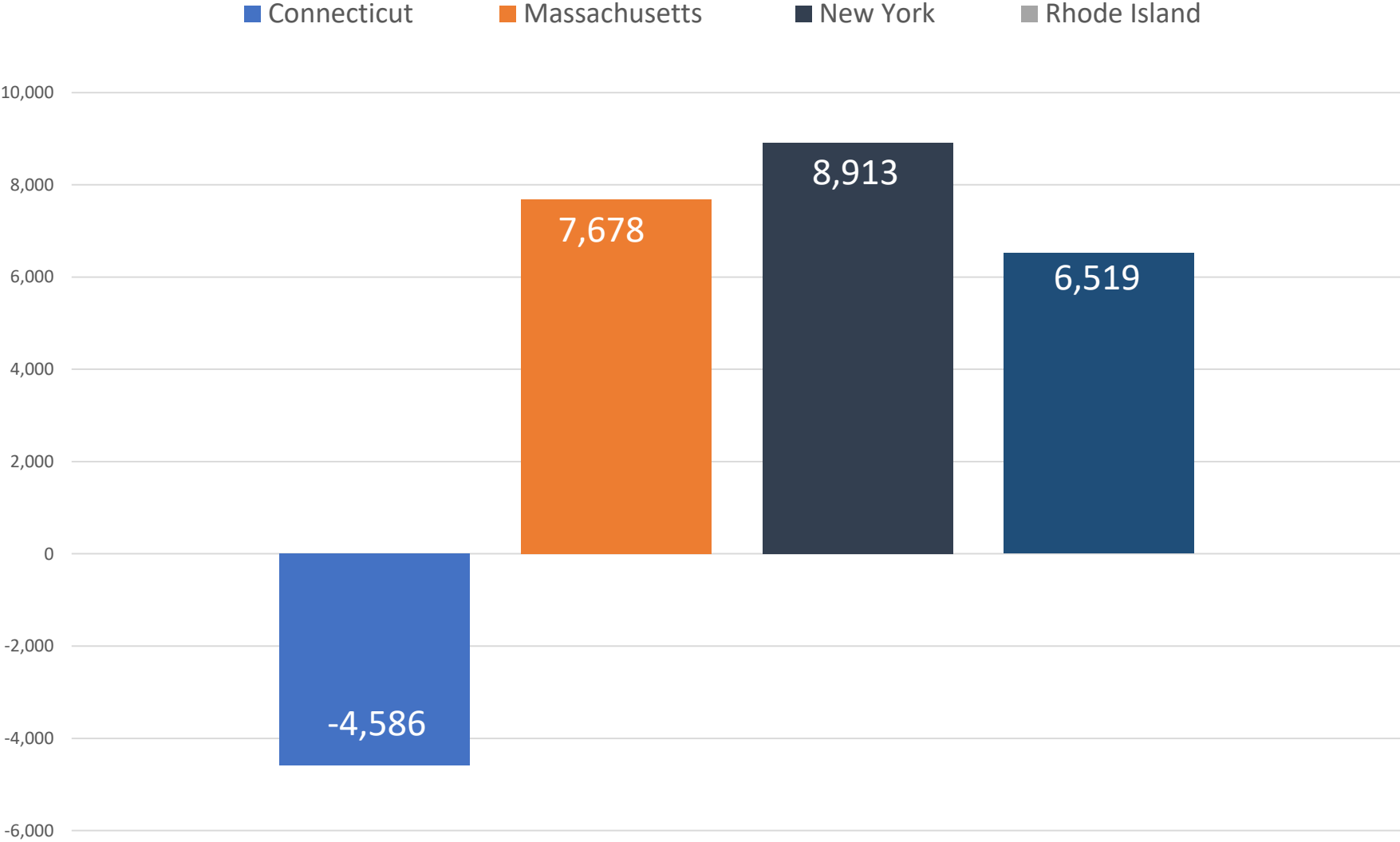
Source: NCES



Only 57% of recent high school graduates enroll in college in-state; this is the 4th lowest percent in the country, after only DC, VT & NH.

Net Migration of College-Going Students in the Northeast: Fall 2016

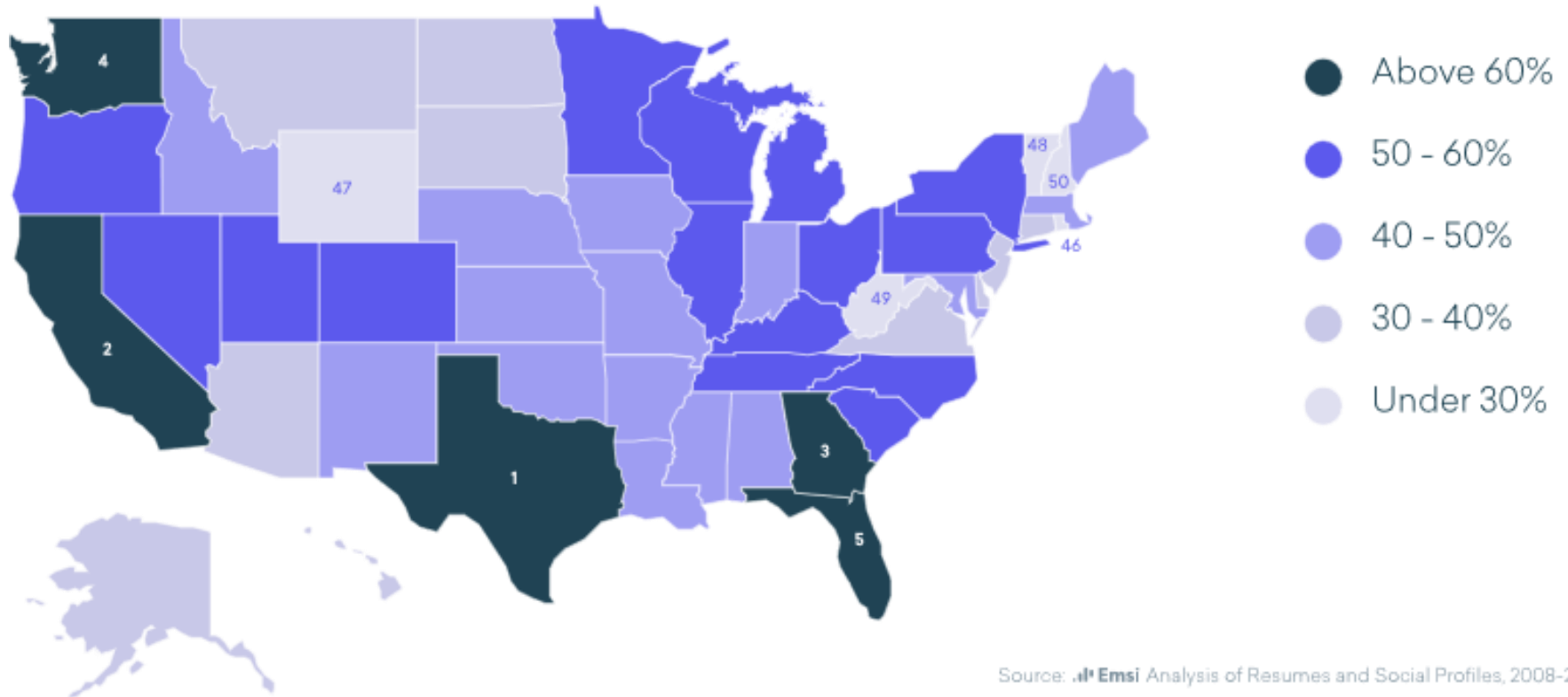
Source: National Center for Education Statistics



Connecticut is the only state in the region with a net-loss of college going students

Retention Rates of College Graduates, by State

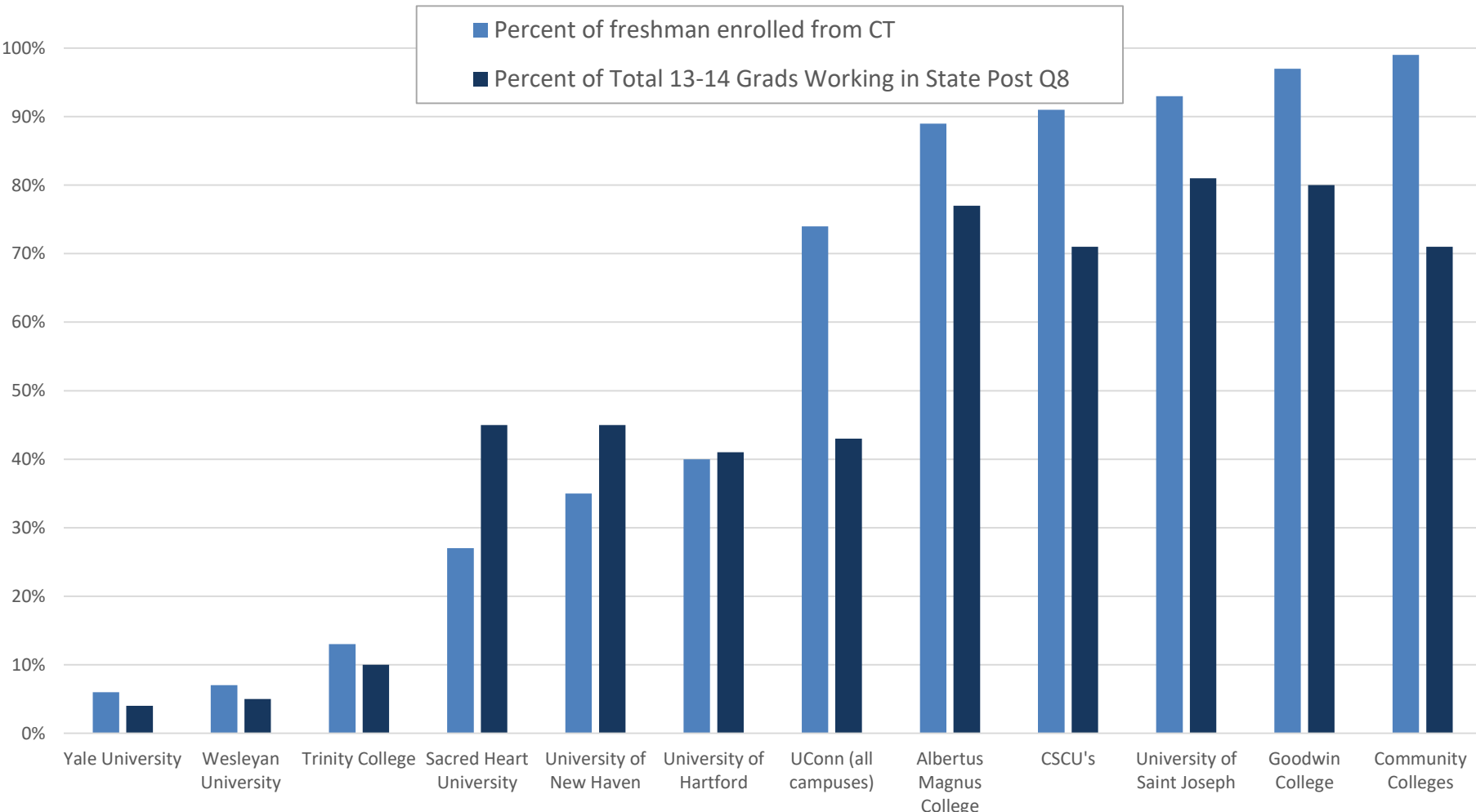
Source: EMSI



Currently, Texas has the strongest retention rate for college graduates. Georgia, Washington, and population giants California and Florida also retain more than 60% of their graduates. New Hampshire, Vermont, West Virginia, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Wyoming have the lowest retention rates, keeping less than 30% of their college grads. Connecticut ranks 37th nationally, retaining 38% of its graduates.

Percent of CT Residents Enrolled as Freshman as Compared to Percent of 13-14 Graduates found Employed in CT 8 Quarters after Graduation

Source: P20 WIN



Public and private institutions that enroll a greater percentage of CT students retain more graduates in state upon completion