Thank you to all of those who have proposed this legislation, and all of those who will take it into consideration today. It makes me personally happy to see my hometown representative, Senator Maroney, on the list of sponsors, as well as UConn’s representative, Senator Flexor. I would like to thank my colleague at the University of Connecticut, Derek Pan, for his continued effort in making mental health access a right for all, as well as our Dean of students, Eleanor Daugherty, who ensures that our school’s students are best cared for. I’d finally like to thank Valerie Cooper, who has conducted amazingly successful mental health first aid trainings on our campus.

I’m here today, not just on behalf of myself, but on behalf of the student body at large. I am lucky to have been chosen as a representative for students at UConn, and I want to use my voice to help them as much as I can.

Far too many of us have felt the impact that mental health issues can have on our friends, family, and other loved ones. With mental health issues being such a preventable problem and tragedy, we should be remiss not to put forth our best effort in trying to remedy this crisis which results in 10% of deaths in people ages 15-24.

At a point in time most critical to our emotional and psychological development, we are also at one of the most stressful times in our lives thus far - college. As many of you may already know, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, or NAMI, has reported in studies that approximately 1 in 4 college students suffers from some manifestation of mental illness. As a result, this massive segment of the population is truly deserving of representation on the state level, and I’m quite excited to see the beginnings of this representation in Proposed Bill 750.

750, in its brief entirety, is a fantastic start to addressing the crisis of mental health, which affects youth at rates never-before-seen. With state-level advocacy and assistance, the work that many colleges do within their own campuses can be expanded and supplemented, setting a golden standard that Connecticut’s schools can all attain.

However, this is only the beginning. A bill being passed is just the first step in enacting change. Once that’s accomplished, the real work begins. There must be effort

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made at every level, at every post-secondary institution in our state, ensuring their compliance in increasing mental health facilities for their students.

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