



Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges

Service Employee International Union (SEIU) Local 1973 – “Stronger Together!”

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Senator Haskell, Representative Haddad, and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

My name is Maureen Chalmers and I am the President of the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges (4Cs), SEIU 1973, which represents full and part-time faculty and staff at the community colleges and part-time faculty at the University of Hartford. I apologize that I cannot be there in person to testify in support of SB 19, *An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses*, and HB 5013, *An Act Concerning Access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program by Eligible College Students*.

“On its website, the United States Department of Justice highlights a chilling statistic: one out of every four female undergraduates will be victim to some form of sexual assault before graduation” (<https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/preventing-sexual-assault/>). Further, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) states that nearly 70% of victims do not report the assault (<https://www.rainn.org/statistics/campus-sexual-violence>). The 4Cs supports SB 19 and its efforts to create a sexual misconduct climate survey for our state’s higher education institutions and protecting students that are victims or witnesses to an assault from disciplinary action. We hope this tool will give us a greater understanding of the pervasiveness of sexual assault on our campuses, so we can find stronger means of prevention.

The 4Cs also supports HB 5013. Food insecurity is a growing problem on college campuses in Connecticut and nationwide. When students face difficulty meeting basic needs like not having enough food, it affects their academic performance. Students can be more prone to miss class and opt out of extracurricular activities. In one study, *Hunger on Campus: The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students*, students who dealt with hunger “felt less on-track, confident, in control, focused, and interested in their school work. They also felt that college was less worthwhile, felt less welcomed by faculty, and felt less engaged both inside and outside of the classroom.” Many of our Community Colleges have opened food pantries in response to the growing problem of food insecurity on our campuses, and we support the efforts to ensure that our students are able to access Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, if eligible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.