

## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

## PUBLIC HEARING

CHAIRPERSON: Representative Edwin  
Vargas

SENATORS: Duff, Fasano, Formica,  
Hartley, Kushner, Looney,  
Moore, Witkos

REPRESENTATIVES: Davis, D'Agostino,  
DiMassa, Godfrey, Perillo,  
Phipps, Vargas, Yaccarino

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Will everyone please take their seats. We're about to commence the public hearing. Welcome. I'm calling the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee Public Hearing to order. Will the clerk please read the safety instructions?

CLERK: In the interest of safety, I would ask that you note the location of an access to the exits in this hearing room. The two doors through which you entered the room are the emergency exits and are marked with exit signs. In the event of an emergency, please walk quickly to the nearest exit. After exiting the room, go to your right and exit the building by the main entrance, or follow the exit signs to one of the other exits. Please quickly exit the building and follow any instructions from the Capitol Police. Do not delay, and do not return unless and until you are advised that it is safe to do so. In the event of a lockdown announcement, please remain in the hearing room and stay away from the exit doors until an "all clear" announcement is heard.

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REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you very much. Just quickly, I'd like to say we -- this public hearing is so that we can interview the people who are nominees for different positions of responsibility within state government, and many of our committee members, as you can see from the nameplates -- many of our committee members are involved in other committees; so, you will see people coming in and out of the meeting as time allows them to, but we do keep our votes open until 4 p.m. in the afternoon so that people can cast -- our legislators can cast their votes. Today all resolutions are joint, which means that the recommendations of the committee will go both to the floor of the House and the floor of the Senate.

We'll start with the House Joint Resolutions, and the first individual we're going to skip over because I received a request to allow Kevin O'Connor of Greenwich to speak first. He has a flight to catch. So, in the interest of helping him catch his flight, we're going to move him to first on the agenda. Kevin O'Connor of Greenwich, would you please rise, raise your right hand. Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth? Please be seated, and it's customary that when we begin these interviews, we allow the nominee to make an introductory statement, and after those remarks, we open it up for questions. Could you please turn the microphone on? Okay. The floor is yours, Kevin.

KEVIN O'CONNOR: Great. Thank you, Representative Vargas. Good morning to you and to your fellow distinguished members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Kevin

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O'Connor. It is a pleasure to be with you this morning. I should at this moment also thank my fellow colleagues here who will be testifying for their courtesy in letting me go first. I have both a doctor's appointment and a flight to catch; so, I appreciate everyone's courtesy in accommodating my schedule in that regard, as well as yours. So, thank you.

I was originally appointed to the UConn Board of Trustees by Governor Malloy in June of 2018 and was later renominated by Governor Lamont to continue my service on the board. I thank both governors for allowing me to serve in this capacity. Some very brief background on me. I'm a Connecticut native and lifelong resident, and I'm a proud graduate of the University of Connecticut School of Law where I earned my JD in 1992. I currently serve as chief legal officer for Carrier Corporation, a division of United Technologies, a role I assumed earlier this year. Prior to that I served as chief legal officer for Point72 Asset Management in Stamford, Connecticut. Prior to that I also worked at UTC as vice president of global ethics and compliance, and I was a partner in two large Connecticut law firms. In my public service career, I've spent a fair amount of time on the federal level working at the US Securities and Exchange Commission and the Department of Justice and had the pleasure of serving as US Attorney for Connecticut for six years in the 2000s.

I have maintained very close ties with UConn Law School throughout my career. I've taught classes at the school. I've hired many UConn Law grads in the various public and private sector roles I've been

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privileged to hold, and my wife and I were pleased to have recently endowed a fellowship for UConn Law students to work in the US Attorney's Office which does not provide for paid summer internships. At Dean Fisher's invitation, I also serve on the Law School's advisory committee. As a trustee, I currently chair the Board's committee on athletics, and I also serve on the Financial Affairs Committee. It's been my pleasure and privilege to serve on the UConn Board, and I truly hope I can continue to do so. As most of us -- all of us probably know, UConn is one of the state of Connecticut's greatest assets and one of the finest public research universities in our country. To have the opportunity to contribute to it as a graduate, as a trustee, is a role I take very seriously and I find very rewarding. It's a great way to repay UConn and the state of Connecticut for the wonderful cost-effective education I was privileged to receive there. Like my fellow trustees, I welcome the opportunity to bring my own experiences to bear on the Board, and I collectively hope we can help UConn chart its future, navigate the many challenges we face along the way, and ultimately succeed. Thank you again for your consideration, for all the General Assembly has done to support the University over the years, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much, Mr. O'Connor, for your introductory statement, and congratulations on your appointment by Governor Lamont, and your reputation precedes you, your good work for the United States Government and your work in the private sector. You're eminently qualified to serve on the Board of Trustees for the University

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of Connecticut, an organization that I think is dear to every Connecticut resident's heart. My wife and I are big fans of the UConn women's team, which rarely disappoints, and I'd just like to say that I feel your presence on the Board -- and you're being reappointed, if I'm correct.

KEVIN O'CONNOR: That's correct.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And since you've already served there, any thoughts on the direction of the University that you'd like to share with us?

KEVIN O'CONNOR: Yeah, I would simply say I think it's a very exciting time with a new president who brings outside perspective to the way things are done. I think his focus on making UConn a research institute and more competitive in terms of attracting funding for research grants, I think will be very good in terms of its contribution to our state economy. I think -- in the seat in which I sit on the athletic subcommittee, I think there's tremendous potential for the athletics department. Certainly tremendous challenges, but I think the move to the Big East was a real tribute to David Benedict and the athletics department. I think it's going to do wonders for the men's and women's basketball program as well as other sports, I think both from a competitive perspective but also from a financial perspective. So, notwithstanding the many challenges, and there are many, I feel very bullishly optimistic about the future of UConn in this day.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Very good, and, you know, one of the issues that always comes up year after year is the whole issue of the role of the hospital, John

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Dempsey Hospital, the UConn Medical School, the UConn Dental School. Do you have any ideas in terms of the role that they play in our community?

KEVIN O'CONNOR: Yeah, I have a perspective that is pretty unique because I chair the board of Trinity Health of New England, which is another large health system here in Connecticut, and, so, I'm very familiar with the challenges that health care faces, and UConn is not alone in that regard. Obviously, it's filling a huge need for many of the population of Connecticut, but it has severe financial challenges, and I think health care in the best of times is a very challenging environment right now. I think the concept that they have been exploring of a public-private partnership would make a lot of sense, but there are real challenges. We took a look at it at Trinity Health, and the unfunded pension liability -- it's something we're all very familiar with here -- is your real obstacle to a public-private partnership. But I think for the future of UConn Medical Center, the Dental School, the Medical School, we've got to continue to be proactive and look for those sorts of strategic partnerships to help boost the school financially because it does -- the schools and the facilities financially because they do provide great services to a needy population throughout Connecticut.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, I'm glad to hear that. I've been a patient at the new hospital. The facility is wonderful, and the staff there is great, and I had surgery there, repaired a hernia, and I've got to say I got first-class treatment there. So, I hope that the hospital continues to thrive and that we can work out whatever challenges we have to work

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out. The other issue that concerns me always with this state service is that sometimes we underfund our state agencies, and then when people start to complain, you know, we always look to privatization, quasi-public agencies, or simply contracting out services, when, in fact, if we were running the agencies the way we should be running the agencies, perhaps people would be happier with those services rather than looking to privatization as a quick fix. And you mentioned the pensions, and, you know, one of the problems we've been grappling with is that the public doesn't understand that the pensions are actually very well financed. What the problem is, is the legacy pensions that over 70 years were allowed to go in arrears, and now we're in the red, and those are the problems, and those people are long gone, and there's nothing -- there's very little that our current administration can do to address those issues. But in reality, the pension issue has been largely solved in terms of current employment. So, any thoughts on that?

KEVIN O'CONNOR: Yeah, no I don't disagree. I mean, I think this is a historical problem that doesn't -- certainly didn't start with the Lamont administration or the Malloy administration, for that matter. It's been going on for a long time, and I think you have to -- in order to solve a problem, you have to recognize it, and it's not productive to point fingers. It is what it is, but it's a real issue, I think, affecting the state beyond UConn. And I agree with you. I think today's current approach to it works. It's just the legacy pension issues that continue to create problems for UConn and for other state agencies.

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REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yes, to former Governor Malloy's credit, he did fund the pension plans according to the actuarial recommendations. So, you know, if every governor prior to him had done the same, we probably wouldn't be in this kind of a situation. My vice-chair, Representative Phipps, is here with me, and any questions or comments? If not, I hope you make your doctor's appointment and your flight. Oh, we have -- we have a question from Senator Witkos. Sorry, I didn't see you there, Senator.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I'll be quick, Kevin. Unfortunately, you're first; so, everybody else that's up for UConn is going to get the same questions. So, they have a chance to think about their answer. While the legacy pension may be an ongoing problem, it's the cost differential of current employees for the benefits that I think remains to be the roadblock informing a public-private partnership. From the trustee's perspective, what actions are you taking to address that?

KEVIN O'CONNOR: That's a good question. It's not an issue that I've had to deal with as a trustee directly in my tenure on the Board. It's an issue that we've talked about vis-à-vis our ability to complete for federal grants and the like and the fringe benefit costs. The specific issue you're referring to -- the differential -- is not something that's ever come to me as a Board member; so, I can't give you a direct answer to that.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): And you mentioned in your testimony about what the new president coming in, and I think he's continuing on with President Herbst, was to make Connecticut, UConn specifically,

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a research facility and university, and that seems to be driving up the cost for tuition for our students. And we're always grappling here in Connecticut when we hear news releases of tuition is going up to X percent every year, and while we're reducing some of the block grants that UConn's getting on the operational side, we're still providing capital infrastructure. How do we balance out the want of the university to invest more in research while maintaining an affordable college education for our kids?

KEVIN O'CONNOR: No, t's a very good question. We recently approved a tuition plan that will go out four years. The good thing is we're locked in for the next four years on the tuition, and they're very by, I think, national standards, modest increases in tuition year over year. And we as a Board did vote to approve that recently, and I was comfortable with that. Look, I went to UConn, and I remember what I paid, and I look at what we pay today, and I realize inflation has come in, but I think I can speak for the Board in saying most of the folks on that Board are laser-focused on the cost of tuition. Most of them have sent children there or relatives of some sort, and, so, we do look at that very closely. And I think the view is that we -- it's not an either/or. We don't have to have low tuition or more research. We can do both. We can hold it flat. I think the recent tuition plan is a really good step in that direction, and now we're going to have to compete for more research dollars with that tuition locked in, but I don't see us raising tuition within the context of the plan we've agreed to just to go help get research.

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SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): I just have two more questions. In any business, and education is a business to some degree, the biggest cost factor is the cost of labor. Has there been -- I don't know if it reaches the trustee level, as to the amount of hours that a professor spends in a classroom versus doing outside research. It's come to our attention here in the legislature that oftentimes you may have a professor that only teaches one class or maybe two classes, yet they're a full-time -- a tenured professor, and they've got somebody else teaching their class because they may be doing a research project or a fellowship or something like that. So, could you just speak to that?

KEVIN O'CONNOR: Yeah, I don't recall an instance in my time on the Board where that specific issue has come up. It doesn't surprise me that some teachers have heavier teaching loads than others. I would think that if I went out, for example, and I was able to get millions of dollars in federal grants and bring that money into the university, I might do that at the expense of not a full-time teaching load 'cause I'm spending a lot more time on my research, but the university is benefiting from that. And my understanding is the teaching load is somewhat commensurate with the amount of research that one is doing, but, again, as a Board member, I don't think we've ever really looked at it on a case-by-case or even or more generic basis.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): And my last question -- thank you, Mr. Chairman -- is the biggest complaint that I get in my district is, you know, "I want to go to UConn, and I can't get in," or "I'm told to go to the regional campus." I think with the recent

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opening of the Hartford campus it's kind of changed it from the West Hartford one before, a little old and dilapidated and outdated, to now really a modern vibrant area of education excellence. But how do we look at the number of kids that we -- if it rises to the trustee level, it may not -- where we're taking out-of-state or out-of-country students versus Connecticut students first.

KEVIN O'CONNOR: Yeah, I think the question is -- you know, what rises to our level obviously isn't an individual admission decision, but we do pay attention to the percentage of outside students -- outside Connecticut and inside -- and I think it's roughly, and someone can correct, about 78 percent, 77 percent internal versus external. And, look, I think there is a benefit to having -- my daughter's going to the University of Virginia next year, and, so, we will be paying much higher tuition than residents of Virginia, but I'm glad they're letting her in, and I think she's going to have a wonderful experience. So, I do think there is a real benefit to UConn students having out-of-state students there, but I think we do as a Board have to be mindful of not letting the pendulum swing too far, where we're closing the door on Connecticut residents 'cause they're the ones funding this great university, and we wouldn't want to do it. And I think from the Board's perspective, we're focused on that percentage, and I think 77/78 percent is a good percent. If it got much lower, I'd be concerned, frankly, and I think having the regional campuses is a really good thing for people who want to work full-time and attend school 'cause Storrs -- I can tell you living in Greenwich, getting to a Board meeting in Storrs is challenging; I could only

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imagine for a student who has a job. So, I've seen the Stamford campus. It seems to be doing a really good job giving people the benefit of a UConn education, who for personal or financial circumstances can't reside in Storrs. And, so I think that model is working for a lot of students and opening doors to more Connecticut residents, as well.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you, Senator Witkos. If there are no further questions or remarks, I'd just once again like to congratulate you on your reappointment to the UConn Board of Trustees, and before I let you go, there's one question we ask of every nominee. Is there anything in your past that you believe might prove embarrassing either to this committee, to the governor, or to the state of Connecticut?

KEVIN O'CONNOR: No, sir.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much, and that concludes this portion of the public hearing.

KEVIN O'CONNOR: Thank you for your time.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And good luck with your appointments.

KEVIN O'CONNOR: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): I'll ask everyone who's here to be interviewed to please bear with me. We have one more change in the order of the agenda. We have Mr. Daniel Toscano who has been nominated to be the chair of the UConn Board of Trustees, who has a

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meeting with some of the UConn policy makers in a little while; so, he's asked if he could please go first, and if there's no objection from any -- oh, Senator Witkos has already left, but he'll be back, I'm sure. And I see no objections; so, Mr. Toscano will you please come forward and raise your right hand? Do you please promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

DANIEL TOSCANO: I will.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Okay, please be seated, and, as is customary, this is a time when we allow our nominees to make their initial comments; so, the floor is yours, Mr. Toscano.

DANIEL TOSCANO: Thank you. I appreciate your time. I did submit a written statement which you should have. Rather than summarizing it or reading it and putting you to sleep, I thought I'd just touch on maybe a couple of points. One is why am I doing this, which is a question I ask myself frequently. I was a student at UConn in the '80s. I have a son who's a student at UConn today. He's a junior doing very well, and, hopefully, he's in class or studying right now. I know what it's like to be a student at UConn, but what I've observed is it's a very, very different world today than the one that I lived in when I went to school. It's incredibly more complicated. The world is a challenging place to be a teenager or someone in their early 20s trying to find their way to adulthood, and I'm here for the students. I want to make this a better place for the students who come to UConn. I want the environment to be better for them, and I want to see them succeed. So, it really boils down to that. That's what brings me here. We have 20,000 students

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on campus, and I can't help all of them, but I'm going to help as many of them as I can.

The second point I would make is about affordability. You asked a couple questions about that, and it's a topic very near and dear to my heart. When I was a student at UConn, I struggled financially to put myself through on my own. I know what it's like to have access to the dining hall cut off because you haven't been able to pay your tuition yet because you're waiting on a scholarship fund to come in, and it hasn't come in yet, or a paycheck from a winter-break job that hasn't come in yet. I know what it's like to sweet-talk the people at the door to let you in to get a meal, and I know so many of our students deal with that today. So, when we talk about the cost of attendance and tuition and everything, it's something very near and dear to my heart. We sponsor two full-cost-of-attendance scholarships for students. We've probably put ten or 12 through since we established them, and that means a great deal to me.

The last thing I'll say which is a little bit of a non sequitur, but I have the mic, and, hopefully, there is a camera rolling -- is there are a lot of people at UConn that make this the great institution that it is. We hear a lot about our president, our provost, our amazing faculty and researchers, our coaches, our student athletes, but there's one person who almost never gets mentioned, and while I've got a mic and a camera, I'd just like to mention here to this committee, and that is Rachel Rubin who you may know is the secretary to the Board, and she has been the person that keeps UConn running for a very, very long time. And when the

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governor called me and talked to me about this appointment, I said, "There's only one thing I need; I need Rachel." And, thankfully, she's agreed to serve the entire Board, and we're grateful to her; so, I would just like to acknowledge the amazing work that Rachel does in supporting this university. And with that, along with thanking you all for your support, not only of UConn because it's been significant, but what you all do for the entire state of Connecticut. This is a labor of love, I think, what you do, much like what I do is a labor of love, and we believe in this state, and this state is going to see greatness again; I very much believe that. So, with that, I'll take any questions you might have.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much for that statement. I agree with you that the opportunity to serve in these positions gives us an opportunity to serve our communities. I had an opportunity to chat with you before the meeting, and I believe you're eminently qualified to be the chairperson of the UConn Board of Trustees. And certainly your reputation precedes you, as I said to the prior nominee, a person with quite an extensive background and very successful, and I would say that you have a lot of friends. I've gotten a lot of phone calls encouraging this committee to support your nomination from our former colleague, Representative Andrew Fleischmann. I got a call from Representative Terrie Wood and many others, and I told them, "Fear not, you know I think Dan Toscano has got the support." I haven't heard anything negative at all about your nomination, and like I said, I think you'll do a great job. And I'd just like to say that in this kind of a position,

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chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the University of Connecticut, our flagship university, I see that as an opportunity for any individual to set a lifetime legacy to make their mark on the history of our state. So, I think it's a key position, and I think that there're very few people I can think of that can fill that role, and Governor Lamont has placed his faith in you and has appointed you to this position, and I believe that you have the determination to succeed in that position to help our flagship university continue its successful journey. It's done quite well, and I think there're a few more chapters for UConn in our future to excel with you at the helm. So, without further ado, my vice-chair, Representative Phipps, any comments or questions? If not, congratulations once again on the governor's appointment to the chairmanship of our University of Connecticut, which I think every resident in the state of Connecticut -- I told this same thing to Mr. O'Connor, and I'm saying it to you -- I think every resident in the state of Connecticut has a special love for our flagship university. Representative Phipps, the floor is yours.

REPRESENTATIVE PHIPPS (100TH): Thank you for being here. Once again, this is not about your resume 'cause that's clear, and your service to the state of Connecticut is, once again, self-evident, but in particular when you look at North Carolina and their flagship university system around the Triangle and the partnering of those universities, what could a triangle look like here in Connecticut, and what would it take to move forward with a system or a mentality like that?

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DANIEL TOSCANO: Yeah, well thank you for the question. It's a good one, and it's one there's an enormous amount of work going on right now. I think in prior testimony there was reference to the development of a much broader research footprint, and my first introduction to that was when we hired Susan Herbst as our previous president, I think eight, almost nine years ago now. And one of the comments she made to me when I first met her was, "I can't believe that a university like UConn is not an AAU university," which AAU is American Association of Universities. It's a very prestigious collection of the best research universities in the country. So, we were late to that as a university. It's not that old, but it's very, very difficult to get in, and she said we need to build out the research footprint that would make us qualified to be a member of the AAU. And that's what a real research flagship can do.

Our current president, Tom Katsouleas, who's an engineer by training, if I throw all my science questions at him, and he always answers them, was a great hire in this vein that he understands research funding. And I served on the committee that -- a search committee that ultimately recommended President Katsouleas to the governor, and I can tell you one of the things that really stood out to us was his history both at Duke and at University of Virginia in driving a broader research footprint. And we challenged him to double our research funding. It's currently in the area of \$250 million dollars a year. We feel like that should be closer to \$500 million, and he developed a plan that will get us there.

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There are a number of initiatives underway today with government agencies, quasi-government agencies, and the universities in the area, of people who have research firepower to attack this very issue. Data science will be the number one area, I think, that if President Katsouleas were here he would probably highlight as one of the principal areas where UConn can be an absolute leader in an area that's growing rapidly and would be great for the economic development of the state. So that work is going on. I would say watch this space. I think you're going to see a lot of initiatives over the next 12 months that go directly at building up that sort of partnership with other universities in the state and, as importantly, other corporations in the state. They have a thirst for partnering with UConn that we really have not satisfied yet.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Along the same lines that Representative Phipps just mentioned, in research, we made a huge investment in Jackson Labs a few years ago, partnering with the UConn School in Farmington, and I'm hoping that that will lead to some landmark patents and opportunities for developing some medical treatments for people who have illnesses that to this point are considered incurable, and I'm looking forward to the whole development of genetic medicine. But I'd like to just point out that there's an individual there at UConn that I admire very much. His name is Dr. Cato Laurencin, and I've had an opportunity to go there a few times and see the work that a lot of these minority kids -- Latino kids, African-American kids -- are doing in terms of medical research, and it's really inspiring. So, I think that we may not be there completely as a research university, but I

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think that we're on the right road, we've got the momentum, and we have a lot of assets there that can be developed; so, I've been joined by my co-chair, Senator Duff. Senator Duff, would you like the floor?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Dan, how are you? Good. Thank you for taking on this position. I appreciate and am happy to know you for a long time from the UConn Foundation and all the work you've done there, as well, and your support of UConn just totally and unequivocally and just without being less than 100 percent. Your support of UConn is unmatched by many. And, so, I just -- I apologize for being late coming into the room, but appreciate all that you've done for us, for our state and our flagship university. Would you mind just kind of -- if you just for my edification, just sharing just a couple sentences about what you -- kind of your goals, I guess, as chair? Turn on your mic.

DANIEL TOSCANO: Thank you. Good morning. It's always wonderful to see you. I would say from a very, very high level because we spend a lot of time as a Board in the detail, and one of the things that I want to see from our Board is to be more than just a board of consent, more than a board that meets [Sneeze] -- bless you -- to, you know, to review the work that's been done, but really to drive strategy for the university and for the broader state. One of the things that I think first and foremost for me is there's been a massive investment in this university by the state. Billions of dollars have been poured in to make this place great, and that's a responsibility of this Board, to not only make

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sure that we get the most out of but that we continue to build. There's a tremendous foundation that's been put in place, and we owe it to the state of Connecticut to make sure that that continues to grow. So that investment needs to continue to look very smart. That's number one.

The other thing I would say big picture for me is I mentioned earlier my compassion for students. It's why I'm here. Affordability is a big topic for me. You can measure that by tuition. I think that's one easy way to look at it where you can kind of get a sense, but there's this term called *cost of attendance* that really takes into account what does it really cost you to spend a year on our Storrs campus as a full-time student, and that's the number that I think matters most to our students and their families is not what is your headline tuition, but how much money is it going to cost me to get through this university. One of the things that helps that is how quickly can you get through. We have one of the best time-to-graduation rates in the country. So, if you can get out in -- I think our number is 4.2 years -- you're not there a fifth and a sixth year which just drives up cost. And, so -- and philanthropy is the other big area for students. As you know, I spent 11 years on the Foundation Board, and I chaired it for three, and the big goal of that foundation is to drive philanthropy such that more funds will flow into the university to lower the cost, the realized cost for our students. So, regardless of what the tuition is, what are they paying?

So, we have some very ambitious goals there, the likes of which the university has never seen.

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They're ambitious enough that I'm nervous about them, and if I wasn't nervous about them, then we wouldn't be trying hard enough. So, those are two areas that I will be focusing my attention in the time that I'm on this Board.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you, Dan. I appreciate that. My second question was going to be, you know, how does the synergy between the Foundation board, and the trustees come together in a skill set, but I think you answered that question when you talked about philanthropy and you talked about how to utilize resources to the university the best way possible. So, I appreciate your global answer there on UConn and, you know, kind of your vision for the future. If you were to kind of wave a magic wand, I guess, as a trustee, how would you -- what do you want to see for UConn nationally? Also, in-state, but also how do you want UConn to be -- with these ambitious goals you have, how do you want UConn to be viewed around the country?

DANIEL TOSCANO: Yeah, well I think nationally and internationally I personally think this is the greatest state in the country, and I think we should have the greatest flagship university in the country. I think we live in an area where we have an advantage of size in that, you know, we're not as big as the state of Florida or California or Texas; so, what we -- the size of what do is much more manageable. We also live in an area that is very highly educated, right? The workforce, our population, values, education -- there are a number of places you can go, unlike anywhere else in the country, where you can get a very, very high quality education. I think UConn fits into that ecosystem

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as a state entity and really focusing on affordability in a way that a private wouldn't.

As it relates to within the state of Connecticut, I think that sometimes people say to me, "Well, it may become too hard to get in," and I think that's actually a sign of success because UConn is really just one piece of a pyramid, right? We have an entire state university system, we have community colleges and technical schools, and from my vantage point, I think there should be a spot for every person in the state of Connecticut who wants to get higher education into their life in the form that they want. So, if you want an absolute top-notch public university experience, you don't have to go to Virginia, you don't have to go to Michigan, you don't have to go to California. You can stay right here and get it. And I've testified before the Higher Ed Committee before that when students leave the state to pursue education, the statistics show most of them don't return, and that's a loss to us. You know, that's a person that we grew in the state of Connecticut and then allowed to go somewhere else, and I don't want to see that happen personally.

But we have to be very careful about how we fit into that pyramid. Our new president, Tom Katsouleas, talks about stackable degrees -- which I don't fully understand the mechanics of it, but he could certainly explain it to you -- where you can piece together a very customized education using the various resources in that pyramid. It doesn't all have to be at UConn. Some of it could be at one of the state universities or even the community colleges that ultimately flow through. One fun fact

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about our university president, for all of his accomplishments as a student, as a researcher and an educator, is his higher education experience started at a community college in California, and then he moved on from there to the state university system. So, he knows what it's like to live that journey; so, it very important to him that our pyramid remains intact and is really seamless for anybody who wants to move through it.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Great, thank you, and I appreciate that answer. Those are all the questions I have, and, again, thank you, Dan, for your willingness to serve.

DANIEL TOSCANO: My pleasure.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you very much, Senator Duff, and if there are no further questions, I just want to once again congratulate you on your appointment by the governor to be the chair of the UConn Board of Trustees. And you've already made a good decision with President Katsouleas. The guy is really doing a lot a good things. So, I have one final question that I ask of all nominees, and it is that is there anything in your past that you believe might prove embarrassing to this committee, to the governor, or to the state of Connecticut?

DANIEL TOSCANO: I am guilty of only bad jokes.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): [Laughing] Well, I think that we can give you a pass on that. So, thank you very much.

DANIEL TOSCANO: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, now we can revert to our original order of the agenda, and I believe that

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would be a House Resolution/Joint Resolution of the Honorable Anthony P. Fusco of Brookfield to be an alternate member of the Judicial Review Council. Would you please raise your hand? Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

HON. ANTHONY P. FUSCO: I will.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Your Honor, please take a seat, and as is customary, the floor is yours.

HON. ANTHONY P. FUSCO: Thank you, and I'm presently assigned to the Bridgeport, Danbury, New Britain judicial districts. I thank Governor Lamont for nominating me as an alternate member of the Judicial Review Council. I would be honored should this committee appoint me to the Judicial Review Council. Thank you for your consideration, and I'm pleased to answer any questions you may have.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, I've read your resume, and first of all, let me thank you for your military service.

HON. ANTHONY P. FUSCO: Thank you. You're welcome.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And I'd just like to say that I think the Judicial Review Board will be well served by having you as an alternate member, and, frankly, I have no questions unless other members of our committee have any questions or comments they'd like to make.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): I'll just chime in. Thank you for your willingness to serve, and thank you for your service to our country.

HON. ANTHONY P. FUSCO: Thank you, Senator Duff.

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REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, if there are no further comments or questions, there is one question we ask of all our nominees, and, although I'm sure I know the answer already -- Is there anything in your past that would prove embarrassing to this committee, to the governor, or to the state of Connecticut?

HON. ANTHONY P. FUSCO: No.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much.

HON. ANTHONY P. FUSCO: Thank you, gentlemen.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): That brings us to our next nominee, Attorney Richard T. Meehan of Shelton to be a member of the Judicial Review Council. Attorney Meehan, please raise your right hand. Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

ATTY. RICHARD T. MEEHAN: I do.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Please be seated, and the floor is yours for an introductory remark.

ATTY. RICHARD T. MEEHAN: Thank you. Good morning, Senator Duff, Representative Vargas, Representative Phipps, Representative Perillo. It's an honor and a privilege to be considered for appointment as an attorney alternate to the Judicial Review Council by Governor Lamont. My sincere thanks to this committee for the opportunity to appear before you and speak to my desire to serve on the Judicial Review Council.

By way of background, I'm a senior partner in the Bridgeport law firm of Meehan Law, born and raised in Bridgeport. I attended the University of Notre Dame and UConn Law. My wife Kathy and I have been

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married for 50 years with five sons and 11 grandchildren. I began my career as a law clerk to the late Supreme court Justice, Herbert MacDonald, then joined my Dad in the practice of law in 1975 in what was then exclusively a criminal trial practice. In 1979 he was privileged to be appointed as a Superior Court judge. He ultimately came back to the practice two years later, missing the work that he loved as a trial lawyer. My practice has evolved into both civil and criminal trial work. Presently my firm consists of my oldest son and partner, Michael Meehan, whose practice is almost exclusively in the area of family law; our two associates, Caitlin Pfeiffer and, most recently, my youngest son, Richard John Meehan, who I had the privilege to administer the oath of office as an attorney four weeks ago.

I'm board-certified as a criminal trial specialist, and civil trial specialist, and a civil pre-trial specialist by the National Board of Trial Advocacy and have served as part of the faculty of that organization, writing and grading certification exams in the criminal trial specialty. I've also served as an adjunct professor for three years at Quinnipiac Law School. I'm proud to have an AV rating from Martindale Hubbell for now 32 years, as well as being a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, the Litigation Council of American, Trial Lawyers Honorary Society, American College of Board Certified Attorneys, and the American Board of Trial Advocates. I've tried over 70 cases to verdict and participated as appellate counsel in over 22 appeals. My practice is statewide and consists of state and federal criminal defense work, plaintiff's

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personal injury litigation with a concentration in plaintiff's dental malpractice as well as commercial litigation. I was appointed as the interim chair in July 2014 by Governor Malloy, completed my four-year term as council chair in November 2019.

I'm a firm believer in accountability and transparency in the operation of our justice system. It's important that the system's integrity be maintained by vigilant watchdogs who understand the importance of the canons of judicial conduct. While I have great respect for our judges, I am also not intimidated by judges. I've learned there is a respectful way to disagree with the court. Since joining Judicial Review, I've seen first-hand the issues our judges face on a daily basis, especially in our criminal court and family court, the sources of the great majority of complaints. There is a balance the judges need to strike between accommodating pro se litigants who either by choice or necessity cannot afford counsel and adhering to the rules of practice. I've had the opportunity to get to know the committee members who presently serve. Our discussions are lively. We've conducted the business of the JRC in an efficient fashion, carefully respecting the positions of the complainants as well as the judges. Presently we're studying how we can make the process of receipt of investigation review complaints or streamline them better able to utilize current technology. I also bring an institutional memory to the council, having now been a member for nearly six years. I believe the experience I've had is a benefit to the council as a whole, to our newly appointed chairperson and the sheriffs.

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In closing, I believe that my 45 years as a trial attorney provide me with the ability to understand both the concerns of those who must access our justice system as well as the judges called to serve it. I want to thank you for giving me the chance to tell about myself. I'm happy to answer any questions the committee has.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you very much for that introductory statement, and congratulations on your appointment by the governor to the Judicial Review Council.

ATTY. RICHARD T. MEEHAN: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): From your comments, I gather that you have quite extensive experience as an attorney, and I think you'll be a welcome addition to the Judicial Review Council. It's always important to have the attorneys' perspective on that council, as we have a lot of judges already on the council. You haven't served -- this is your initial appointment, if I'm correct?

ATTY. RICHARD T. MEEHAN: No, I served as the chairperson since 2014, and my term as chair expired in 2019 when I was then tentatively appointed as an alternate member.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Any -- well, then as you've already served on the Review Council, any thoughts in terms of the future of the council?

ATTY. RICHARD T. MEEHAN: I think we're privileged in Connecticut to have a very well equipped judiciary to handle the problems that come before them. The biggest problem that we face as members of the council is the misunderstanding of those who

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are grievance, the difference between judicial misconduct and judicial error. Very often we get people who are not able to afford an attorney grieving a judge for a judge's ruling when it's really an appellate issue. Because I've served for such a long period of time, I've paid attention to other states -- California, New York, for example -- where there are a significant number of judges and a significant number of serious complaints. In my tenure, we have not had but one judge who required some type of disciplinary action by the council. There have been times when we've been criticized for what appears to be not disciplining judges, but we can only discipline judges if they have, in fact, violated the canons of judicial ethics, and they have not, in my experience.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yes, I think that misunderstanding in terms of what the Judicial Review Council can and cannot do is pretty widespread. Every so often, as a state representative, I'll have one of my constituents ask me to speak to a judge about an issue, and I tell him, you know, that's inappropriate. You have to work with your attorney, but that's a separate branch of government, and we only deal on the policy end of these issues and on the statutory end of the issue but not on the actual trials. And I have to tell them if you're not happy with the result, then your only option is truly an appeal to the Appellate Court and perhaps if it rises to the Supreme Court, but that's about it. But I think people do think people can intervene, and sometimes they seek to get people involved in issues -- the mayor or this one or that one. I guess we have to do a better job in civics, one of the classes I used to teach when I

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was a teacher -- civics and government, unfortunately subjects that don't get enough attention these days but that are necessary to build better citizens for the future. So, thank you for your testimony. I'll open it at this time for any of the members of the committee. Yes, Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Mr. Chair, thank you. I'm just happy to see another guy from Shelton. I mean, there aren't a lot of us up here. So, I'll take it. [Laughing]. No, but seriously, thank you for your service, and I know this isn't your first go-around, so we appreciate the knowledge and skill you bring to the table. Thanks.

ATTY. RICHARD T. MEEHAN: Thank you, Representative Perillo.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Any further comments or questions from committee members? If not, thank you once again, and before you leave, I have to ask you a question I ask of all nominees. Is there anything in your background that may prove embarrassing either to this committee, to the governor, or to the state of Connecticut?

ATTY. RICHARD T. MEEHAN: Nothing at all, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Okay. Well, thank you very much, and congratulations again.

ATTY. RICHARD T. MEEHAN: Thank you, sir.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Our next nominee is Mr. Charles F. Bunnell of Waterford to be reappointed as a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Connecticut. Before you take a seat, could you

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please raise your hand? Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

CHARLES F. BUNNELL: I do.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): All right, you may -- and the floor is yours for your introductory remarks.

CHARLES F. BUNNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Co-Chairs Duff, Vargas, and ranking member Perillo. My name is Chuck Bunnell. I'm honored to appear before you today as one of Governor Lamont's appointments as a trustee to the University of Connecticut's Board of Trustees. I wish to offer my sincere thanks to this committee for the opportunity to appear before you. I was originally appointed to the Board by Governor Malloy in 2013, and I can honestly say that being on this Board has been a true honor. The University of Connecticut is our flagship university and an institution of higher learning that we can all be proud of. We have made some significant decisions in the last six years, but I believe UConn is on a path that will best position the University and our state for the decades ahead.

I'd like to give you a little background on myself and let you know how I believe my background has been and will continue to be an asset to the Board. My wife Eva and I live in Waterford where we have four children and eight grandchildren. I serve and have served on many boards in our region and the state including Make-a-Wish, Oak Hill, Connecticut State Tourism Commission, the Southeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, and several other boards including the Thomas J. Dodd Center at the

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University of Connecticut where I was one of the founding members.

Professionally, I serve as the chief of staff for the Mohegan Indian Tribe. In that capacity, I assist the tribal government and its elected leaders in all aspects of their government and business operations here in Connecticut, the United States, and our international properties in Canada, South Korea, and our recent expansion into Greece. Our family has a deep commitment to public service. In 1988 when this building was brand-new, I served as an intern to Senators Larson and O'Leary as a junior from Trinity College down the street. It provided me my first lessons into how government can be used to help people in our society to move forward. My internship at the capitol led me to a job with Senator Christopher Dodd immediately after graduation. During my time with Senator Dodd, I held several different positions that created some wonderful opportunities for me, not the least of which was an overseas assignment to the Irish government, in particular with Nobel Peace Prize winner, John Hume. For over a year, I worked in Brussels for the European Parliament as they worked to form the EU.

As I mentioned earlier, serving on the Board of Trustees of the University is a true honor. I believe no other board has the potential to shape the future of our state like this university and their Board of Trustees. The University of Connecticut, working in concert with Connecticut state universities and the community colleges, has the potential to drive our state workforce and economic future like no other single organization.

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Through the collaboration of goals and a web of excellence, we can recognize the hard work already done and assure that the vision of the legislature and the governor are met. As Connecticut looks to guarantee a future where jobs are imported into our state and our children and grandchildren are not forced to leave us to find employment, we must consider the incredible opportunities that lie within our education system. By leveraging that strength already existing with our system, we can drive this and other concentrated efforts to see ripple effects which will improve all of our lives. The investment we make today has the potential to pay dividends for generations and decades to come. With your consent, I desire to be a part of that investment. Thank you for the opportunity to be here with you today, and I'm certainly happy to answer any questions you may have about my appointment.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Bunnell. I see from your resume that you've been involved with the Mohegan Tribe for a while.

CHARLES F. BUNNELL: I -- since before opening the casino and in my role with Senator Dodd, I was involved in their going through the process of recognition. We actually have a hearing happening across your atrium.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, I always hear about from Senator Osten, you know, about the Quiet Corner of the state and the need for economic development in that part of the state, and it's good to have a person that brings that perspective because I think our two casinos have done a lot for that area, as has the University of Connecticut, and they are

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certainly one of the few drivers of economic development for the Quiet Corner. And I appreciate your prior service on the Board of Trustees and also your willingness to continue there. And at this point, I'll open it up for any questions or comments from committee members.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good to see you, Chuck. Good afternoon. I just want to say I appreciate your wanting to continue to be a member of the Board of Trustees over at UConn, and certainly your work over with the tribes has done a lot for Eastern Connecticut, and, as a matter of fact, the entire state of Connecticut. And, so, we appreciate the extra work being part of our flagship university. Kind of as I asked Dan Toscana with regard to the Board and what you -- how you see UConn being looked at in the state and nationally and internationally, I guess, that are your thoughts on that, as well?

CHARLES F. BUNNELL: Unfortunately, I didn't hear the question to the chairman because I certainly think he is in a wonderful place to lead us into the future. Personally, as I said, I really believe it is a partnership between all the institutions of higher learning working with the governor and this institution of the General Assembly, to drive our future. I mean, our future truly is within the walls of these schools across our state, and, so, working together and planning for the future, and I think we should be extraordinarily proud of what's happened in the last 20 years at the university, and I know many of you, as I read through the bios of other members of the committee, are proud graduates of the different schools of the university, and I

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think we need to hear from you and from the Board and from the governor about what the future may hold and align ourselves with that.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Yeah, and how do you view some of the other -- besides just the flagship, the one campus at Storrs -- how do you view the other satellite locations around the state?

CHARLES F. BUNNELL: I think they're integral. I think they're integral to the entire university. I know that there were talks in the past of closing some of them. I know that there are absolutely no plans on the table currently to do that, which should be reassuring to those that have those within their districts. I think they're important, and for certain students that unfortunately might not make it to the Storrs campus in the first round, it's an excellent way for them to be introduced to the excellence that we offer.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Great, thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you, Senator Duff. Any further comments or questions from committee members? Yes, we have from Representative Godfrey. You have the floor.

Representative. GODFREY (110TH): I make more as a representative, but Chuck, how are you? Good to see you.

CHARLES F. BUNNELL: Nice to see you, sir.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): And thank you for your service on the Board of Trustees. I'm one of those alumni who -- a Law School graduate way back in the 20th century, and like everybody else in this state,

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I bleed blue, as they say. I'm glad to hear your comments about the satellite campuses. There are other concerns that I know you'll be working with us on. I'm concerned about the skyrocketing costs of public education, higher education, the inability of graduates or students to repay the incredible amount of loans because it's more and more expensive every year. I went to Fordham University for my undergraduate. I remember big demonstrations back in the 1960s when they tried to move the tuition from \$1200 dollars to \$1500 dollars. I'm talking to a friend of mine who works here. He's got his sons down there now. He's paying \$70,000 dollars a year. It's getting out of hand, and we need to work together to try and mitigate the high costs of higher education in general and with the public universities in particular, and I know you're kind of a champion on this. Would you like to elaborate?

CHARLES F. BUNNELL: I absolutely am. I happen to also be the father of a student who is at Tufts right now, who is graduating this year in pre-med, and I will tell you even I, whenever we get a chance, try to convince him to apply to the University of Connecticut Medical School because by comparison it is a bargain for the education and the superior education that we offer here in Connecticut. Yes, at Tufts, we're looking at \$70,000 dollars. You know, we happen to be in a position where we can help our son, but we also know very, very clearly that others aren't in that situation, and working together to balance the cost. Because you know it's absolutely a balancing act, you know, the size of the classroom, the excellence of the faculty that is there. So, you want excellence, and you've got to balance the cost to

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provide that excellence, and I think the administration at the University of Connecticut -- I watch them, and they are diligent and care deeply about controlling that. And, so, I think the statements you make are absolutely in alignment with what as a trustee I see and hear from every meeting I attend.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): I've had a couple of discussions with the new president, and I'm very impressed, and I think certainly his heart's in the right place and he's very student-oriented. I think that's a big part, that's a very big deal 'cause when we see this -- and I know there are, well, depending on what your point of view of a problem or an opportunity, we're seeing more and more Connecticut kids going to either a community college or a state university for two years and then transferring into UConn. I know it's mildly controversial, and I've heard people on both sides of this argument without having made a decision on my own mind. I have been trying to keep an open mind on that. But it's all tied to the cost. It's really all tied to the cost, and I wish we weren't losing \$42 million dollars a year on sports, but that's another topic for another day. But, congratulations again. I'm delighted that you're on the Board of Trustees and will continue to do so. Thank you, Chuck.

CHARLES F. BUNNELL: Thank you for your leadership.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you, Representative Godfrey. Any further questions or remarks from committee members? If not, thank you, Mr. Bunnell for your being here today to answer our questions, and before I let you go, there is one question we

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ask of all our nominees. Is there anything in your past that you believe may prove embarrassing either to this committee, to the governor, or to the state of Connecticut?

CHARLES F. BUNNELL: Absolutely not, Mr. Chair.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well then, thank you very much.

CHARLES F. BUNNELL: Thank you, sir.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): That brings us to our next nominee, Dr. Andrea B. Dennis-Lavigne of Simsbury to be reappointed as a member of the Board of Trustees at the University of Connecticut. Will you please raise your hand? Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

DR. ANDREA DENNIS-LAVIGNE: Absolutely.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Please be seated.

DR. ANDREA DENNIS-LAVIGNE: Thank you very much.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And as is customary for all our nominees, we allow them to make their introductory remarks; so, the floor is yours.

DR. ANDREA DENNIS-LAVIGNE: I appreciate that, and good morning. Thank you, Representative Vargas, Representative Perillo, and Representative Phipps before you leave. My name is Andrea Dennis-Lavigne, and it's really truly an honor and a privilege to stand before you as a trustee of the University of Connecticut, and I'm honored to be renominated by Governor Lamont for this role. I'm actually a Hartford native, which I mentioned earlier, and I'm practicing veterinary medicine in the town of Bloomfield. My husband Randy Lavigne and I are proud alumni of the University of Connecticut, and

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we also have a son that recently graduated from the Digital Media and Design Department at UConn. My husband actually was a former All-American and gap captain of both the basketball and baseball teams; so, I do think as a family we come -- we have an understanding of not only students but student athletes at UConn. I received my doctorate from Tuskegee University, which is a historical Black college in Alabama. My residency took place at the University of California at Davis, and then it was time to come back home here in Connecticut to practice after I served as an associate professor on the Island of St. Kitts at Ross University. I'm actually founder and owner of the Bloomfield Animal Hospital, and that's been since 1992. I'm also a host to radio talk show on WTIC, and it's called Pet Talk which for almost two decades has given me an opportunity to educate and assist pet owners to provide a quality of life for their animals, and I would consider WFSB Better Connecticut my television home where I also demonstrate the proper care of pets, and that includes Jonathan the UConn Husky mascot.

My volunteer work began at UConn going back to 1993 where I actually served on the Alumni Association Board of Directors and was president for two years from 1997 to 1999. I have served on two search committees for the president of UConn. Both President Herbst and President Katsouleas were both exciting additions to our leadership and our administration. Presently, I am chairing institutional advancement for the Board of Trustees, and one of the committees that we recently just began in last December was a committee under the Board of Trustees on diversity and inclusion which

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I'm very proud to chair. I have also been chair of academic affairs and have some insight to some of the questions that were asked about faculty and the time of faculty members. I thank you for your time, and it would be an honor to continue to serve on this Board of Trustees. It's a great group of people that are dedicated to do what's best for the state and for UConn. Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much for your initial statement. I can't think of anybody better to serve on the Board of Trustees than somebody so devoted to the University at so many levels and having served on the Board of Trustees, as an alumni representative and having been involved -- and it's fitting that as a doctor in veterinary medicine that you would be on the Board of Trustees of an institution that originally was an agricultural institution.

DR. ANDREA DENNIS-LAVIGNE: Absolutely.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): So, I really am pleased with your desire to serve, and at this point, if there is any question or comment from any of the other committee members, I'll open the floor. If not, you know, congratulations on your appointment by the governor -- your reappointment by the governor to this position, and before I let you go, I have to ask you the question I ask of all nominees. Is there anything in your background that you believe may prove embarrassing either to the governor, to the state, or to this committee?

DR. ANDREA DENNIS-LAVIGNE: Not at all. Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much. And that concludes the House Joint Resolutions, and that

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brings us to the Senate Joint Resolutions, the first of which is the Honorable Michael L. Ferguson of Meriden to be an alternate member of the Judicial Review Council. Before you take a seat, will you please raise your right hand? Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

HON. MICHAEL L. FERGUSON: I will.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Okay, thank you very much, and as is customary, we allow all our nominees an opportunity to make some introductory remarks; so, the floor is yours.

HON. MICHAEL L. FERGUSON: All right. Good morning, Co-Chair Representative Vargas, members of the committee. I am honored to be here before you today. I would like to thank Governor Lamont for nominating me for appointment as an alternate member of the Judicial Review Council. My name is Michael L. Ferguson. I live in Meriden, Connecticut. I've had the privilege and honor to serve the state of Connecticut in the capacity of a family support magistrate since September 2011 and a chief family support magistrate since September 2018. I look forward to serving as an alternate member of the Judicial Review Council and welcome any questions you may have.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much. I see you're a chief family support magistrate from your resume; so, you bring a perspective from family court to the Judicial Review Council. Is this a reappointment, or initial appointment?

HON. MICHAEL L. FERGUSON: Initial appointment.

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REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, I can't ask you much about the operation until you're had a chance to have your baptism of fire. But I congratulate you on your appointment by Governor Lamont to this position, and I'm happy to see that you'll be serving in that capacity, and I'm happy to see your willingness to serve. I have no personal questions. If any committee member -- yes, Representative Perillo?

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Mr. Chairman, thank you. So, I'm not an attorney, and I don't serve on the Judiciary Committee, but I pay attention a little bit, and family support seems to be one of the areas of law where emotions run high, and we've heard from other folks sitting in that chair who've spoken with us that oftentimes individuals who submit complaints, if you will, do so because they weren't happy with the outcome, and I'm wondering what your thoughts are on that. Obviously, I mean, you bring an important perspective; so, I was just wondering if you could share a little bit about what you've seen in your role as a magistrate and how that translates.

HON. MICHAEL L. FERGUSON: Well, in Magistrate Court, the majority of the litigants, they're self-represented. They don't have attorneys, and, so, a lot of times they may not like the outcome, so they'll file a grievance against the magistrate versus an appeal.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Well, that tells me something I didn't know; so, I appreciate it. Thanks a lot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you very much, Representative Perillo. Representative Godfrey, you have the floor.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): Kind of a followup. Thank you for your willingness to serve. Family law -- I am an attorney, although I don't practice. I'm a full-time legislator right now. Family law is probably one of the most difficult places to preside. Regardless of the outcome of most cases, both sides hate you. [Laughing]. It's kind of -- you know, both sides didn't get everything they wanted; so, you're absolutely right. We -- I am on the Judiciary Committee, and the most vocal opposition to judicial appointments and reappointments is people who have been in family court, and it's very difficult. So, having that background, I'm really happy you're going to be on Judicial Review, even as an alternate, because you bring, I think, a unique experience, a point of view that not a lot of other people may share, to deal with wrestling with the grievances against judges. So, let me congratulate you, and I'm really, really happy you're going to be doing this rather important job. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL L. FERGUSON: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yes, and I also wanted to comment on the fact that those of us like my vice-chair, Representative Phipps, and myself who are also members of the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus, have been, you know, organizing ourselves to push for more diversity on all our boards and commissions, and I'm happy to see that Governor Lamont has been appointing people of more diverse backgrounds onto our boards and commissions.

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So, I'm doubly happy to see your appointment, seeing as how you are involved with organizations, civil rights organizations in the past. So, that brings a whole new perspective that we need in our boards and commissions. At this point, are there any further comments from our members? If not, I want to congratulate you once again on your appointment by the governor to the Judicial Review Council. And I have one question to ask of all nominees; so, don't take it personal. Do you believe there's anything in your past that might prove embarrassing to this committee, to the governor, or to the state?

HON. MICHAEL L. FERGUSON: No.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much.

HON. MICHAEL L. FERGUSON: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And that brings us to our next nominee, the Honorable John F. Kavanewsky of East Norwalk to be a member of the Judicial Review Council. Your Honor, do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

HON. JOHN F. KAVANEWSKY: I do, sir.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Okay, thank you very much. As is customary, this is the moment for you to make your introductory remarks; so, the floor is yours.

HON. JOHN F. KAVANEWSKY: Thank you so much. Co-Chair Vargas and all members of the committee. I want to thank the committee for an opportunity to be heard today and to answer any questions you might have about my nomination by Governor Lamont to be a member of the Judicial Review Council. I also want to, of course, thank the governor for this nomination.

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I've served on the council on an interim basis for approximately six months now. The purpose of the council, I think, in brief is, as we know, to hold judges and other judicial officers to high standards of conduct both on and off the bench, and that's rightly expected of them. Inasmuch as these standards are designed to ensure that litigants and others using our court system are treated fairly and with respect, adherence to the standards is vital to promoting public confidence in our judicial system. While judges should be allowed to perform their duties without concern for unwarranted complaints, any judge who does not abide by these standards should be held accountable.

I hope that you will find my own experience -- I was going to say as a judge, but as an attorney for approximately 16 years in private practice in the greater Norwalk area doing a diversity of different work, but that, and then my own experience as a judge qualifies me to participate on the council with others who are chosen to do so. I've been a superior court judge for just over 25 years now. For most of that time, I've been in the criminal division of the judicial branch. For the past year, I have sat on civil matters as well as on both the delinquency docket and child protection docket of the juvenile court in Stamford. I also have what are called short calendar assignments which puts me in touch with the foreclosure docket and other civil matters. As I've said, I've sat on this council on an interim basis for about six months now, and I can appreciate that the duties of this council are substantial. They are also essential. If my nomination is approved, I look forward to working with all other members of the council to help ensure

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that its vital work is done, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you for your initial statement, and congratulations on your reappointment by the governor. You've already been serving?

HON. JOHN F. KAVANEWSKY: No, this is my first appointment.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): This is your initial appointment?

HON. JOHN F. KAVANEWSKY: Correct.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): But, had you served in some capacity?

HON. JOHN F. KAVANEWSKY: Only on an interim basis since approximately September, since the legislature was not in session then, and there was a need to fill a vacancy of Judge Bozzuto, I believe.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Any thoughts on your interim appointment? Were you able to learn something there?

HON. JOHN F. KAVANEWSKY: I tell you, I certainly have. I will say this. I am just so amazed, impressed, and grateful for all of the work that all of the council members do and bring to the body of the council collectively. You know, there are six lay members of the council, three judges, three attorneys as well as alternates in attendance, and I will say that everybody has a voice, everybody is conscientious. There is full participation. We sometimes come at it from different perspectives, but we are respectful of others' perspectives, as it

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should be, and it's just a wonderful group of people to work with.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, I appreciate your willingness to serve on the Judicial Review Council. You know, as a retired teacher and former educator, you know, I don't know that I would want to serve on a committee of review of my peers' or my colleagues', you know, behavior or operations; so, it is kind of a difficult position when one has to review those kinds of things that affect people that may be friends and colleagues that one has to work with. So, I appreciate your willingness to serve on this council. And without any further comments, does any member of the committee have any questions or comments they'd like to make? If not, you know, I feel you're eminently qualified to serve, and thank you for your willingness to serve.

HON. JOHN F. KAVANEWSKY: Thank you, sir.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And before I let you go, I have one question that I ask of all nominees. The following question is: Do you believe there's anything in your past that might prove embarrassing to this committee, to the governor, or to the state of Connecticut?

HON. JOHN F. KAVANEWSKY: No, sir, not at all.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, I think not, right? So, thank you very much, and that concludes this portion of the public hearing.

HON. JOHN F. KAVANEWSKY: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): You're welcome. And that brings us to our next nominee, Attorney Mitchell R. Harris of Avon to be a member of the Judicial Review

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Council. Attorney Harris, before you take a seat, would you please raise your right hand. Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

ATTY. MITCHELL R. HARRIS: I do.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): You may take a seat, and at this point, you may proceed with your initial remarks.

ATTY. MITCHELL R. HARRIS: Thank you Co-Chair Vargas, Vice-Chair Phipps, and members of the committee. I believe some testimony was submitted; so, I won't belabor that. My name is Mitch Harris. I do live in Avon. I am a partner at the law firm of Day Pitney where I've worked for 30 years. I am serving -- I have been serving since December as the chair of the Judicial Review Council subject to this committee's confirmation. My practice is in commercial litigation. I've appeared in courts obviously throughout this state but also throughout the country. I've tried cases in courts throughout the state and in other places in the country, and I've had a substantial amount of exposure to judging both fantastically well done judging and also judging that may leave something to be desired. So, I think my experience certainly helps me in my capacity on this committee. I'd also like to say that whatever the committee thinks of my candidacy, we really have seen today and have a bunch of fantastic people, and to echo Judge Kavanewsky's comments, wonderful people who work together extremely well and really are a fantastic group. So, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and to testify, and I'm obviously happy to answer any questions you may have.

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REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much, Attorney Harris, and congratulations on your appointment by Governor Ned Lamont to the Review Council. I believe that your background qualifies you for the position, and I congratulate you on your willingness to serve. Any questions from members of the committee or comments? If not, thank you once again, and before I let you go, I have to ask you the final question here. Is there anything in your past that you believe might prove embarrassing to this committee, to the governor, or to the state of Connecticut?

ATTY. MITCHELL R. HARRIS: No, sir.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much, and congratulations again.

ATTY. MITCHELL R. HARRIS: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And that brings us to the final nominee for the Judicial Review Council, Attorney Mark D. Phillips of Westport. Would you please raise your hand? Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: I do.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Please be seated, and the floor is yours.

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman Vargas, Vice-Chairman Phipps, Representative Godfrey, and Representative Perillo. It's my privilege and honor to be considered for confirmation of my appointment to the Judicial Review Council as an attorney member, and I thank the committee for the opportunity to appear before you and speak and answer any questions regarding my

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qualifications to serve on the council. Again, I submitted a personal statement and a CV; so, I'll just touch on the relevant portion to my qualifications on the council.

I have 30 years of active trial practice in the courts of Connecticut and New York from infractions, motor vehicle infractions all the way up to complex felony murder trials to jury verdict and many aspects of civil trial work, both to the court and to juries. I'm involved in the trench work in the courts of our state and am very familiar with the administration of justice in the active practice. This experience has provided me with a great understanding and insight as to the practical issues that judges and litigants and participants contend with on a daily basis, as the majority of the complaints against our judges arise from the substantive areas of criminal law and civil trial work, particularly domestic, as we've touched on earlier today, and juvenile and landlord-tenant where litigation is of high emotion, and the personal stakes are heightened and very important to those individuals. The integrity of our judicial system is obviously paramount to the fair administration of justice, and ensuring that the rules of judicial conduct are maintained is of utmost importance.

The Judicial Review Council is benefited by members who understand this process and can apply the rules of law along with the practicalities and the realities of the circumstances which are being complained of, to fairly and dispassionately sit in judgment of our judges. It's my belief that our judges deserve to be given fair consideration for

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the position that they are in as the focus of a complaint, as well as the complainants deserve a full and fair consideration and evaluation of their grievance. This delicate balance requires arbiters experienced in the daily practice of law in the courts. I think I'd bring to the council the qualities necessary to evaluate and determine a fair resolution of these complaints. I thank you for your consideration of my nomination, and I would be most pleased to elaborate on any of the foregoing or answer any other questions that the committee may have of me.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): So, I gather from your testimony that this is a reappointment to the board.

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: It's actually an initial appointment. I was appointed in November of 2018 to serve as the chairman of the council. I began in December, and I served as the chairman of the council until December of '19, at which point Attorney Harris was appointed as the chairman, and I have remained on the council as a regular attorney member and have continued. So, I've actually been serving on the council since December of 2018.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): So, then it's fair to ask you what your thoughts are in your experience on the council?

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: Yes. I would echo the comments of Attorney Meehan and Attorney Harris who spoke to the quality of the members of the council, and obviously Judge Kavanewsky who spoke to the quality and the character of the council members as it's constituted right now, and I would echo those thoughts. I think the council is very well

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composed. There is a diversity of members and of opinions, and I think we need some more private-- public members to be appointed; we're somewhat understaffed in that area. We need the full complement of six regular members and three alternative members. The rest of the council is adequately staffed and does a very good job at seriously considering the issues that are presented without regard for what opinion might give and really addressing the valid concerns. I think they do a very good job.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you for your comments. Any questions from committee members or remarks? Yes, Representative Godfrey, you have the floor.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Congratulations. I'm puzzled by the process that you -- how you got here. Governor Malloy appointed you in 2018?

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: Yes.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): And then Governor Lamont didn't make an appointment last year; he waited until this year.

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: I think Governor Lamont endorsed that appointment. It was -- it came before Governor Lamont took office due to the vacancy in it, but my understanding was the confirmation was to occur last year, but there was a short session in the process similar to how Attorney Meehan's application came up. I actually was appointed to replace Attorney Meehan who was the chairman of the council, and I replaced Attorney Meehan. We were appointed at the same time, and I think the

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confirmation process was to have taken place in the term of 2019, but for some reason, we're here today.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): I'm just a rules and process wonk, and that's weird [Laughing].

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: Unfortunately, I --

REP. GODFREY (110TH): No reflection on you, but it's just very, very strange and a little lax in my humble opinion. You're a solo practitioner?

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: Yes, for 30 years.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): God bless you. Wow.

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: That's why I went to law school.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): And why you have white hair. I understand how that works, too. It's -- and just one little question. You've been a continuing legal education lecturer for the National Business Institute? I'm not familiar with them, but I am familiar with gun laws. Could you tell me a little bit about that? I'm the -- actually I've been called the grandfather of gun responsibility laws in Connecticut. I've been at it for 30 years myself. Could you comment on that, please?

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: Yes. Thank you. That is an outfit that puts on continuing legal education for Connecticut attorney practitioners, and they had contacted me to present at a -- actually I've done three of their lectures on gun law, but my presentation was limited specifically to ethics. So, my presentation was on the ethics of representing individuals regarding the gun laws in the state of Connecticut, specifically to the rules

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that would apply -- the professional rules of responsibility affecting attorneys as they would apply to the practice in terms of what advice that you give. And it is unique in our state because we have a mandatory requirement to disclose and, therefore, violate another ethical obligation of confidentiality when an attorney becomes aware of the possibility that there could be danger to the public or danger to the individual client themselves. So, it's somewhat of a very delicate area where one way or another you're going to violate an area of professional responsibility, and we are a result-oriented society, and at the end of the day, you want to hope to be right in the area that you make that decision. That's the area limited to gun laws. It's not an advocacy pro or con, but how we deal with the existing affairs as the laws are.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): I'm glad you do this. Both as an attorney and as a state representative, I lose sleep over a lot of these gun responsibility issues and have for a very long time, and I appreciate very much both your ability and your willingness to make sure our attorney colleagues are fully up to date. It is a very delicate area of the law. You've got the client responsibility to represent them. At the same time, there's this responsibility to do what you can to ensure that we don't have more gun violence. Thank you.

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: The difference in this state, Representative, actually is contrast with the model rules. The model rules are permissive in allowing a lawyer to exercise their judgment. The Connecticut rules are not. They say you must; so,

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it creates a much heightened liability on the practitioner when they're making that determination of reporting to law enforcement their own client.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): It is interesting, and I've been following that for all these years 'cause, as you know, the Connecticut Constitution has a higher level of gun rights than the Federal Constitution, in that Connecticut says you can own a firearm in your self-defense. The Second Amendment you could argue over -- reasonable people can argue over, and there have been a series of Connecticut Supreme Court cases dealing with the legislature's ability to exercise our police power even with that. So, thank you very much for that very particular, and the rest of your resume is quite nice. Thank you very much.

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Representative.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you, Representative Godfrey. Any further remarks or questions from committee members. Seeing none, I want to congratulate you once again on your reappointment to the Judicial Review Council by Governor Ned Lamont, and I have one question I need to ask you before I let you go. Is there anything in your past that you believe would prove embarrassing either to this committee, to the governor, or to the state of Connecticut?

ATTY. MARK D. PHILLIPS: No, sir.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much. And that brings us to our final two nominees, both of them for the Board of Trustees of the University of Connecticut. First is the Honorable Shari Cantor, the mayor of the great town of West Hartford, my

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neighboring town. Before you take a seat, would you please raise your right hand? Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR: Yes, I do.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Please be seated, and the floor is yours to make your initial remarks.

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR: Thank you so much. I appreciate it. It is an honor to be before you, Representative Vargas, Representative Phipps, Representative Godfrey, Representative Davis, and Representative Perillo. I sincerely appreciate your service to the state of Connecticut. I want to express my sincere appreciation to the governor, the past governor for allowing me the honor and the privilege to serve on the Board of Trustees of our flagship university.

I am a graduate of UConn, as well as my husband. I also am the parent of three degree students from the University of Connecticut, one dual-degree political science/economics undergrad and a law student who is in Hartford working in trademark law, and my oldest son -- we have four sons, but my oldest son received his MBA last year after a four-year part-time program. So, they were very different experiences and to see that. My husband is an engineering grad and law grad. He is a patent attorney and actually has hired a lot of UConn engineering students and law graduates in his firm that has grown rapidly in the last 20 years and is a national -- one of the top three national law firms in the United States. We are very, very proud of our UConn roots, and whenever we meet UConn graduates, there is a humbleness and a dedication and commitment to the

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state of Connecticut, and it is absolutely an invaluable asset that we have in the state of Connecticut.

As you know, I am the mayor of West Hartford, and UConn plays a very substantial part of the West Hartford story. We are the home to the most alumni from UConn, we have the second-most in-state students from UConn, and we actually have the second-most employees in the state of Connecticut that reside in West Hartford. Obviously there are a lot of other communities that are very intimately impacted by the economic impact of UConn, but West Hartford, it's very, very real. I don't think we have another employer and institution that affects West Hartford so greatly. So, we can't lose the fact of the interconnectedness of the economic driver that UConn is for the state of Connecticut, and that never, never, never leaves us. I was on the search committee for the president, and when we were looking for our new leader, that was a really important mission -- that the governor and the president understand the importance of the economic driver that UConn is.

But also, we are shaping our future leaders. Many of you are UConn graduates, as well. They are our social workers, our doctors, our teachers, our lawyers, our CPAs, our engineers, our dentists, financial advisers. They are also a Rhodes scholars and poets, writers, musicians, and artists, and they will guide our world. They need to be critical thinkers. They need to change course in this ever-changing world that we're in and be able to reinvent themselves to be productive workers in an ever-changing work environment, and that's our

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responsibility -- to educate them in that way to be resourceful, resilient critical thinkers that can respond to the changing economic times.

I have been proud to serve on the Finance Committee, Institutional Advancement, Compensation Committee, our new Diversity Committee that I've been asked to serve on, and I also chair Student Life Committee. I'm also so honored to be a part of a committed, engaged, involved, smart, intelligent Board. We are really -- I am very impressed by my colleagues every day with their input and insight and their commitment. We offer a high value of education. We talked about it's not just the cost of tuition, it's also some of the time it takes to graduate. That's a really important measure of affordability; if you're adding a year, it changes that dynamic so dramatically, and that's very, very important to us. We need to commit to keeping UConn a top-tier university while offering the most affordable, effective education that we possibly can. And this Board has done that, and, again, thank you so much for the honor of being before you today and the honor of being nominated, and I'm looking forward to hearing your questions.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, congratulations on Governor Ned Lamont's renominating you. I know you've been serving since 2014, and you have quite an extensive resume and interesting area of law -- intellectual rights on a global basis. And we've been joined by Senator Witkos and by Representative DiMassa, and earlier by Representative Davis. I know that you've been honored many times for many things. The one that really stuck out in my mind was best-dressed by Hartford Magazine.

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MAYOR SHARI CANTOR: I'm proudest of that now, too.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): But, you know, you've been serving there. So, in your service, what do you think are the areas of strengths or weaknesses? Since you've been there since 2014, I think it's a fair question. Any thoughts on that?

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR: So, obviously our strength is the quality of the professors that we offer and the level of competitiveness of the amount of students that we attract. Just 25 years ago, we had 10,000 applications; now we receive 30,000 applications. So, we're obviously a place that our Connecticut students want to come, but not only Connecticut students but students around the country and the world. And that means a lot. I mean, obviously, we want to keep and attract -- I know what we spend in West Hartford for public education, and we want to keep those students in-state and have them give back to the state economy and be that not a brain drain, right? So, we need that. But we also need to be a national player if we're going to be a national university and one that is recognized that attracts the top research professors in the country, and that's the goal. So, I think that's what we've done best.

Obviously, you know that we've had some challenges on the athletic -- you know, in the athletic department. Some, I think, realignment and re-strategizing has -- well, you will see the benefits of that in the next few years. That's been challenging. We also are in a challenging, changing environment of students that the world is so rapidly changing around them, and we need to react and be

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proactive in helping them navigate their way through the challenges of a very complex world.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you very much. Any questions from committee members or remarks? Yes, Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Good afternoon. Thank you very much for your service and for coming today. I just have one question. You mentioned briefly the academics moving forward. UConn Health -- is there a similar plan moving forward, and we're kind of struggling a little bit to keep the doors open, and where are we going with that?

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR: Right. So, there are some really positive things happening at UConn Health, but it's challenging. It was designed as a very small, almost a "ruralesque" campus, suburban campus, and it was never designed to stand alone. It always required state support the way it was designed years ago. So, it is an institution that serves an indigent population and many patients that would use a very different system. They'd go to the emergency room if they couldn't go into UConn Health. So, ultimately it could cost Connecticut more money. We also are educating, really importantly, our doctors and our dentists that remain in Connecticut. We've increased the enrolment there by 30 percent. So, we're producing more doctors that are here, available for us, and we know we're an aging state; so, we need those resources.

But, the structure of it was not meant to be nimble when it was designed, and it's been burdened by a lot of the things that many of our state agencies

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are burdened by, and that is unfunded pensions and fringe costs that are not competitive with -- and, again, many of them are past and not current employees, but they exist, and they're attached to new employees that we hire. When a researcher applies for a grant and the fringe cost or the other cost of that employee is 0.7 or 0.8 percent, and other institutions are applying for grants that are 0.3 higher than their salary, that makes us uncompetitive. So, we have a little bit of an anchor on our ankles slowing us down to what we could do, and that's frustrating. So, I think we've got to figure that out, and that has to be, you know, a strategic small group to figure out how we can make UConn Health more nimble. And it probably makes sense to have a partnership down the road, but, right now I think we've tested the waters, and the partnerships are not really viable the way the structure is with the unfunded pensions.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you. I appreciate that answer, and I think you anticipated my next question which is the legislature's intent a couple of years ago. I think now to ask to move forward in terms of a sale or a partnership or some commission of the two. And when you say that it's -- what would you think has to be done if it doesn't seem viable now, what steps are we moving toward to make that a viable alternative or to say, "You know what, we looked at it, it's not going to work? We've still got to sit here and figure a way to cover the red ink in another manner."

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR: I don't have all the information from the outreach and the responses that partners have received, and I think there's probably

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some very valuable information in there. But I would sit with our strategic partner -- health care leaders in the state, our Board chair, and the governor and figure out the path forward because I do think it's probably going to be carving out unfunded pension liabilities that's going to have to be separated out to make that a more viable option for another partner.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): I think I remember a report just coming out recently that looked at that unfunded pension and the effect that it had, and it didn't seem to have as great an effect on the university as was anticipated or as the numbers were bearing out. So, while I agree it's an issue that needs to be resolved and we can't insert it into the fringe.

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR: And that's why I think that feedback is critically important. Is it the lack of ability -- the state negotiates the SEBAC agreement for us, for the university. So, I think that is of concern to maybe some partners, too, not having that same control. So, maybe it's not just pensions but the whole overall compensation packages that there needs to be more independence from, I think, in that healthcare environment that is so complex.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Would it be different in your view if it was a private institution instead of a public state institution?

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR: I think -- again, I don't know how that would be designed, but there's a public education component to that that's very, very important for the future of Connecticut. So, that would have to be primary part of the mission.

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SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): I don't disagree with that. I'm just looking at -- asking a question from somebody who's been much more involved than I have, and I appreciate your hard work and your input. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you, Senator Formica. Any further questions or remarks. Yes, Representative Perillo, you have the floor.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Mr. Chairman, thank you, and thank you for being here. We appreciate it. You mentioned something interesting about UConn Health, and I just want to understand that a little bit better. You mentioned that a population that wouldn't necessarily be able to pay and isn't necessarily insured seeks its care at UConn, whereas they may choose to seek it in other places in emergency departments. Could you say a little bit more about that?

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR: Well, that's the feedback that I get from UConn Health, that there are populations that they care for that might not have that same coverage in a private institution. So -- I don't know more than that. It was actually a report that came out. A percentage of -- I think there are several populations that UConn has partnered with over the years that might not have the same care -- level of care if they were to go to private institutions.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): The reason why I ask is I'm trying to understand how a provider in Farmington might be different than Hartford or Saint Francis or Bridgeport or Saint Vincent's, or Yale, which are probably seeing a population -- a disproportionately

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higher share of Medicaid population than might UConn. So, it's hard for me to reconcile that without, again, reading the same information that you're seen, but it might be something to push back on and question.

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR: That would be -- we would be happy to come back and make sure that, first of all, the information is right -- that's number one -- and number two, that we have an explanation that is more understandable.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Any further questions or remarks from committee members? I'd just like to say that, you know, your involvement with the University of Connecticut speaks for itself. Your kids' involvement with the university. The fact that you hosted the Trout Brook campus for so many years, which included the School of Social Work which when I was president of the Teachers' Union, I had the opportunity to serve as a field supervisor for some of the UConn students, and I had few interns from their school at my office. I believe that your background is a perfect fit, and you've been serving already, and, so, I congratulate you on getting reappointed by Governor Ned Lamont. The fact that Governor Ned Lamont is reappointing you speaks volumes in itself about your commitment and the strengths you bring. And before I let you go, I also wanted to congratulate you on your 2018 induction into the UConn Business Hall of Fame, and that's what we need -- more women in business. I have to ask you one question that I ask of all the nominees before I let you go, and that is: Is there

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anything in your past that you believe might prove embarrassing to this committee, to the governor, or to the state of Connecticut?

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR: No, sir, there is not. Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, that concludes this portion of the hearing. That brings us to our last nominee, Andy F. Bessette of West Hartford to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Connecticut. Is it "Bess-ette" or "Bess-ette"?

ANDY F. BESSETTE: It's "Bess-ette."

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Bessette; I had it right the first time there. All right, could you please raise your right hand? Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Yes, I do.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And thank you for being so patient, and as is customary, the floor is yours for your initial remarks.

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Great. Thank you, Representative Vargas and Representative Phipps. I have to keep track of who's here. Senator Witkos and -- wait a minute, no, Formica; it's Formica. Who's who? [Laughing]. Thanks, Senator. Representative Davis and Representatives Perillo and DiMassa. Thank you, Representative DiMassa.

You know, I'd just like to say thank you and express my appreciation and honor to be considered to continue as a trustee at the University of Connecticut. And I'll just -- you've got my bio, but I'll go through just quickly to add a few

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things, that I'm currently an executive vice president and chief administrative officer at Travelers here in Hartford. And I live in West Hartford with my wife, Sherry, who is an '87 grad in a master's degree in industrial psych, and we have two grown children, and Chris is a medical student at UConn right now. And I can attest to a lot. Man, we teach these kids. I've never seen somebody work so hard in my life as in medical school at UConn, but it's a terrific, terrific education. And then we have a daughter who's an epidemiologist for the state of New Jersey. And I received my undergrad degree from UConn back in '75 and a master's degree from the University of Rhode Island in '77.

And currently in my role at Travelers as chief administrative officer, I run a whole host of functions that support the businesses in real estate procurement, real estate and community relations, and internal investigations. The list goes on and on. Sports sponsorships which is really important because we've been now for 14 years the title sponsor of the Travelers' Championship on the PGA tour. And we're really proud of what we've accomplished here for economic development of the state and for the economics that we bring to the state with about \$70 million dollars a year in economic activity when the tournament's in full throe. In my 40 years with Travelers, I've had a lot of different roles, but I have a lot of expertise in human resources beyond what I've described -- in advertising, communications, operations in finance and facilities.

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So, I try to bring all of that to UConn on a continual basis, and as you can see, I've had a lot of involvement at UConn since I joined the Board of Trustees in 2014, and I now am a member of the UConn Health Board of Directors, and that's from 2010 to the present. And I currently chair the University of Connecticut Financial Affairs Committee, and that started in 2018 to the present. And in 2014 and 2017, I served on the search committee for our athletic directors, and in 2019 on the presidential search committee for Tom Katsouleas. So, I've been involved. You might wonder how I have the time to do my day job, but I balance a lot of balls, and it works well.

I was also a member of the 1980 Olympic Team and a recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal which I'm really proud of, but I'm proud of it in the sense that UConn helped me get there. It was the educators, it was the professors, it was the coaches, and it was the administrators. This is a true team effort, and what they did, I continue to see today. I continue to see the same values in our coaches, I see it in our educators. Everybody has one goal in mind -- that we want to be world-class and that we want to be the best that we can be. And, so, as I look at what I do today in the community around Hartford, I wear a lot of hats. I just recently finished my chairmanship of the MetroHartford Alliance, which ran for two-and-a-half years, and I remain on the board. I am vice-chair of CRDA, the Capital Region Development Authority which has been building a lot of the housing in and around the capital region. And I'm also serving on the Greater Hartford Community Foundation which runs the Travelers Championship and have been involved

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with Hartford Hospital and Saint Francis for a number of years on their Board of Governors and Corporators. And back to ancient history, back in '07 to '10, I was a trustee at Trinity College.

So, I've seen a lot of different elements of Hartford. You know, what's been very interesting is to see the UConn campus downtown be built and the activity that that's brought to the streets of Hartford, the excitement that I see with the companies who are here and with what we're all trying to do and make Hartford and the state more vibrant, more attractive to businesses. And the one comment I'll make is that one thing that really excites me about UConn for the future is that we're a catalyst for economic development. Any company that's going to come here and/or grow here like Travelers has been growing here, we're looking for one thing, and talent is the word. And, so, we continue to look for the best of the best. The quality of the students that are being admitted to UConn is terrific. We're one of the top five employers of students graduating every year from UConn, and so we hire somewhere in the range of 70 to 100 students coming out of UConn every year. So, we have a big alumni base, as well.

But we also give back. At Travelers we have a program called EDGE, Empowering Dreams for Graduation and Employment, and these young people from underserved communities are a part of what we do. We follow them through high school. We give them internships through college. We pay for their college tuition, and in the end, Empowering Dreams for Graduation and Employment, we hope they come to work for Travelers. And we probably get 60 percent

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that come to work for Travelers, but honestly, the rest go to work for Cigna, they go to work for Aetna, they go to work for all of the major corporations in this region. So, I'll just conclude and say that, you know, the future I think is really bright for UConn from a lot of different perspectives, and I'm excited, and Travelers is excited about continuing to have a great pipeline of talented young people coming to work for us as we move ahead.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much. That was quite an introductory statement and, you know, very informative. How long have you been with the Travelers?

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Forty years.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Forty years. So, you probably go back to the time when my old buddy, Dan Fegels [Phonetic], was there.

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Oh, yeah. Oh, he was my boss. He was my first big, big boss. I was just a little person in the mailroom, but, yeah, he was way -- he's way back, yeah.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And it's an honor to have an Olympian here with us. My old colleague from Hartford Public High School, Lindy Remigino.

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Oh, I know Lindy, yeah.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): You know Lindy?

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Yep. A great man.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, we always used to look up to Lindy, you know, as an Olympian and a gold medalist, and it's a wonderful thing. The

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discipline that it involves to be an Olympian and to be at the top of your game in a sport. What sport was it?

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Thank you. Track and field. I was a hammer thrower.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Juts like Lindy.

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Yeah, right. He was a sprinter. He went to one level higher. He won the gold medal; so, I want to give him all due. Lindy's a great guy, and he achieved so much, but, you know, you learn quickly in sports that the status quo is never acceptable, and you have to always improve every day. And, you know, as I've chaired the Financial Affairs Committee on the Board of Trustees, I reiterate that all the time and that we can never rest on our laurels, right? We're forever trying to fight and get better because as you look at the economic development world out there, it's a battle. I mean we're battling everybody. We're battling all the states, we're battling other states trying to recruit jobs and all of that. And it's really important -- it's so, so important as to having that attitude of, you know, the status quo is unacceptable. We're going to get better every year, and we use that at the Travelers Championship. We use it everywhere. So, that's really important. That's the lesson I take away from what I learned as an athlete back many, many years ago. Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, you know, what can I say? We love Travelers. The city of Hartford -- I represent the city of Hartford here, especially South Hartford which is my district, and the commitment of Travelers to the city of Hartford and

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the fact that you are involved with our flagship university on their Board of Trustees is something that I'm grateful for. And frankly, you know, I think you're going a great job, and you'll continue to do so. Any questions from any committee members. Yes, Senator Formica has a question and then our ranking member Perillo.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you. Good afternoon, sir. Thank you so much for your service everywhere in all of the things that you've done. My grandfather had 42 years in Travelers, I think, retiring --

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Did he?

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Yeah, in the early '80s. I'm trying to figure out when he actually retired. It was and still is a great business. So, Trustee Cantor who I just asked a question about UConn Health, and I thought she was wonderful with her response, and I mean no disrespect, and I'll ask you. But as you're saying that you're on the Board -- what did you say, the Board of Directors?

ANDY F. BESSETTE: The UConn Health Center Board of Directors.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): The Health Center Board of Directors. The same take on the question that I asked her in terms of partnership and moving forward?

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Yeah, I mean I think, you know, we continue to look for alternatives. A public-private partnership is still underway. I mean, we're still trying to assess -- the unfunded pension liability has presented us some issues that have to

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be addressed, and I understand the historical nature of that. But as you go out and look at forming a public-private partnership, the expense side of that is challenging to say the least. But we're not done yet. I mean, we're going to continue to look. We continue to manage our expenses as carefully as we can and cut what we can cut, but we also want to make sure that we provide the highest level of health care to the people that we serve, and that's critically important. And, you know, the specialty care that we provide, whether it be orthopedic surgeons, or you can go down a long list of specialties. Those are the specialty services that we provide to the patients that come in that are on Medicare and otherwise underserved and can't pay or can pay in different ways. But it's really important to note that, you know, what we provide is -- the level of service that we provide is critical, but we're not giving up yet. We haven't stopped looking at the public-private partnership, but we know the one big issue we have to deal with on the expense side is the unfunded pension liability.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): And is there anything that you believe the legislature can do to help or is having a third party come in and help look at it? Those can be worse or better sometimes, and I'm not sure --

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Everyone is so different, Senator. I mean it's really -- everyone is so different. The one commonality has been the expense side, but what's really important, I think, and it's not because my son is there. You know, we're the -- the Medical School at UConn is ranked 31st in the country in primary care out of 185 or 190 medical

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schools. So, this is significant. I mean, what we've created there is really special, and our Dental School, I believe, is ranked even higher. So, we've got two great entities that regardless of what we do with the Health Center, we've got to make sure that we provide the right environment for these young people to learn and to grow into our leaders of the future and get these young doctors and dentists to come and stay in the state and practice here. So, it's not over yet. We're going to continue to fight through this and find a solution with this legislature. It's going to have to be a partnership 'cause there are elements in here that we can't fix, but I think that Andy Agwunobi, who we have who's heading up the UConn Medical Center, is terrific. He is world-class, and he's driving as much change as we can push into the tube at one time in a positive way.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Well, thank you very much for the answer. I did take a tour there a few years ago. It's a wonderful facility, and I took my chances on the dental machines there. I think I probably would have taken somebody's jaw off instead of helping them with their tooth [Laughter], but, in any event, it's a wonderful facility, and we hope we can work out these problems.

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Thank you, Senator. We'll partner with you. We want to make this work.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you, Senator Formica. Representative Perillo, you have the floor.

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REP. PERILLO (113TH): Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Good afternoon. Thank you for being here. First I'm going to suppress my desire to want to talk about golf and the tournament. [Laughing] But we'll move onto economic development, equally as interesting.

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Yes.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): You started to talk a little bit about the role of UConn in economic development, and I know you made some points; we've seen some of that. And like, I mean, I did some of my grad work in the Boston area, and I know we're not Boston, and I know the economic climate -- or the academic climate is a little bit different. But, you know, Boston has seen so much success in linking academia to economic development to technology. Try to have a little bit of a crystal ball, and how do you see UConn's role evolving other than to say, and we hear it all the time in this building, UConn is indelibly linked to economic development.

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Right, but how that -- and this is a business guy, right? So the business person in me says, "We can't bring jobs and companies to Connecticut without providing the one resource we all need, which is talent, which is young people coming out of college," and to me, that's economic development. And if we continue to produce and recruit -- it's a vicious circle, right? You have to recruit the best students to go into UConn and, you know, and I think 73 percent, right, is the number of students from Connecticut that come in. But, you know, we've got to have diversity because it's healthy for the process. It's really important for the process, and, so, in that process we get a

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whole host of excellent graduates who come into our companies and feed our companies, and Travelers grows every year. We go out and look for more students. And, you know, it's interesting. A lot of companies have -- and I'm just generalizing -- turnover between 10 and 20 percent. Well, if you have 7000 employees in Connecticut and remove 10 percent, being a little conservative, it's 700 new people you need every year just to go back to par; not to make a golf joke [Laughing]. But get back to par, right? And, so, we have to continue to drive that. That's so important, and there are so many opportunities in the state, and as I talk to the folks even at UTC and others -- I mean, everybody's looking for engineers -- Stanley Black & Decker, even Travelers. We hire a whole host of different skill sets. So, you know, yes, has the Boston market really, really grown great? Yes, it has, and do they supply great graduates? Yes, but I think the quality of our graduates is just as good.

And the one thing, and I know a lot of young people that I deal with either in the community or through sports or whatever. More and more people are saying, "I can't afford" -- young people -- "I cannot afford to live in Boston and New York." It's just crazy. I mean, when you're paying \$3000 and \$4000 dollars a month for a studio; I mean, it just doesn't work. And, so, they come here and look for opportunities, and they come here and say, "Wow, I can have a place in Hartford -- in downtown Hartford, all the new housing we've built -- for \$1500 a month. I mean, to me there's -- we have a lot of assets that we sell -- we have to sell and making sure that we continue to retain our graduates in Connecticut and come to work for our companies

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and be a part of that economic development cycle of growing the kids here, putting them through college, and having them come work for us, a lot like our EDGE program at Travelers.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): I just observed the very good job the schools have done, or maybe quite frankly, the marketplace has done, again, in the Boston area of linking really smart individuals, whether they be undergrads or grad students or even professors -- linking them with entrepreneurs and private equity and then turning ideas into businesses. And I'm just wondering -- what is the role of UConn in doing that? Is there a role for the school in doing that, or should that just simply happen organically?

ANDY F. BESSETTE: No, there's a role, I believe. There's a role for UConn to do that, and, you know, we, the insurance industry here brought or is developing a thing called InsurTech, right? And we used to go to Silicon Valley to get all of our technology advancements and all that, and we don't now. We stay here. InsurTech is growing here, and there are start-ups associated with that, which is important. But I think just like the companies, more and more what's critical back to your first question, Representative Perillo, was that what's important is that UConn has to continue to develop strong and big relationships with all of the companies in the state of Connecticut because those relationships are where dollars can continue to go back -- sorry, I'm crisscrossing conversations here. But the budget -- when you talk about budget, and I chair the Finance Committee, I mean, we talk about revenue, we talk about expense-cutting, we talk about the input from the Foundation. There're a lot

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of different sources, right? And this is all good for UConn, but it's really important that the revenue side keeps growing, and companies like Travelers are willing to put more money in if we can get the kind of research we need out of -- again, they're in the process of building an autonomous vehicle test track. That's like right up our alley, right up Travelers' alley, and a lot of insurance companies. And, so, UConn is being very creative with Tom Katsouleas in there and the leadership. They're being creative. They're looking. They're reaching out to companies, I think, more than ever before, to make sure that we're getting what we need, but also it leads to more start-ups. It's a -- you know, again, there are more start-ups, and I can't think of the names of them, but there are some start-ups in the Stilts Building and other places right now. But, there's certainly a role for UConn in start-ups.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thank you, and it's good to hear you're thinking along those lines because we're in the building, what the heck do we know? But if you look at the economy, what path is there other than by growing new companies, in many cases from the ground up, and you can't do that unless you've got talent. So, the fact that you're thinking about that and identify that there's a role for the school in helping to make that happen is of great value, and I appreciate it very much.

ANDY F. BESSETTE: And that's how it all connects back to UConn, is that Travelers is out doing this. There are start-ups jumping up in the insurance industry, and you introduce UConn to it, and it again becomes a triangle, and it's a self-fulfilling

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prophecy in some ways that we're all working together to grow the start-up business.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Excellent. Thanks very much. I appreciate it.

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yes, Representative Davis, you have the floor.

REP. DAVIS (57TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Bessette. Kind of to jump on the conversation that you just had and something that you mentioned very early on in your testimony about the relocation of the UConn campus to downtown Hartford and its location right next to the Travelers, for instance and the ability of having synergy in working with students directly with those companies. Have you seen that grown obviously, and then also, you know, what could be done to kind of expand on that, not just with the Travelers but also some of the other major insurers and other companies that are located in downtown Hartford?

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Sure. You know, our capacity when we built the downtown campus was 3000 students, and, as you know, we built that one building, but we also have the infrastructure that we work with the Wadsworth Atheneum on and the Science Center and the library. And, so, when we built it, we built it for 3000; we're busting at the seams. Back to a question earlier to one of my other fellow trustees, when I look at that, I think to myself, "My gosh, this has become popular." Actually the students like being in Hartford, and I can't tell you the exact numbers, but a lot of those students intern in our companies, and they're a part of what we do.

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So, between bringing vitality to the streets of Hartford, which is terrific to see -- they're always out in front of -- on our plaza by the red umbrella taking pictures, but it's great to have them on the streets of Hartford. It's just terrific for our employees to see that. So, it's good for the pride and the goodwill of all the employers downtown to have that element. And I don't want to just focus on Hartford, but in Stamford, too. I mean, we've done so much to develop that campus, it's terrific. And, you know, that has a place in the marketplace, too. But I think that the -- continuing to work with companies to increase and improve the partnerships is really important in getting more and more of these students to be interns doing internships for us in the summers. It helps them, and it helps us.

REP. DAVIS (57TH): Thank you, and thank you for mentioning Stamford, too. I had the opportunity to visit that campus just recently, taking part in one of the governor's discussions that he had with business leaders down there. And I had not been down to the Stamford campus in a long time. I live quite far away, and it was very impressive to see the activity that's taking place down there and then where it's located in the city and the growth within that city and UConn's role in that growth of that city, as well. So, I thank you for mentioning that. I will say, and I haven't commented on anybody else here today, but this is for everyone that's on the Board of Trustees -- I'm very impressed by the willingness to give back to the community, especially those who are graduates of UConn like myself. But you in particular in your position at Travelers, to then be part of the MetroHartford

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Alliance, to be part of CRDA, boards of Hartford Hospital and everything else, it sets a model for, I think, other executives across the board here in downtown Hartford that as the last few years we've been trying to get more and more business leaders involved in this process in trying to be involved in public policy and really provide their input, and I know those efforts have been made with Jim Smith and Bob Petrocelli and others with that group that they formed, and I believe -- were you involved with that group or?

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Yeah, early on. Then there's just a limit for what you can do.

REP. DAVIS (57TH): Well, you certainly have a lot on your plate here, especially with everything you do at UConn, but just to have that and be part of this process and trying to get those business leaders more involved, I think you set that example for everyone, and Mayor Cantor and her family, as well, doing the same thing with Connecticut Innovations and her role at UConn. But I will say that I'm very impressed by all of the nominees here, and as a proud UConn graduate, I'm glad to have you all in positions to help steward the university to even greater things. So, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ANDY F. BESSETTE: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you, Representative Davis. Any further questions or remarks? And I have to echo Representative Davis's comments about the quality of the nominees that we've interviewed today for the UConn Board of Trustees, the new Chair, and the members, the ones being reappointed, the new appointees -- it bodes well for the university

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together with the new president Katsouleas, looking forward to great things. I just would like to comment that -- my strong support for the John Dempsey Hospital. I think that, you know, we are looking to position ourselves as a research university, and the hospital offers great opportunities as a research institution, not only for the UConn School of Medicine and the Dental School, but also for Jackson Lab and all the other investments we've made in research. And I always caution people in terms of rushing into privatization because, like I said earlier -- I don't know if you were in the room when I said this earlier, but many times we short-change our own public institutions, and then people cry out for privatization when, in reality, we've undermined our own institutions by not supporting them fully. I'd just like to thank you for coming here and for your willingness to serve. I thank the Travelers, one of the pillars -- economic pillars of the city of Hartford. And I believe the city of Hartford is in a renaissance, and when you see the hundreds of millions of dollars in private money investments in the city, it tells me that in another three or four years we're going to see the fruits of all that investment. So, thank you, and before I let you go, there's one question I ask of all nominees. Is there anything in your background that you believe might prove embarrassing to this committee, to the governor, or to state of Connecticut?

ANDY F. BESSETTE: No.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, that's it. That concludes the last of our interviews, and now at this point, if there's anybody from the public that would like

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to comment either pro or con on any of our nominees, this is the moment to do so. And even though she's not speaking, I would like to recognize one of my colleagues, Representative Terrie Wood, who earlier called me to weigh in on her strong support of Dan Toscano for the chairmanship of the Board of Trustees at the UConn. Thank you for being with us, Terrie. And if there're no remarks from the public, I'd ask the clerk is there any written communication regarding the nominees. If not, if there's no written communication to enter into the record, that concludes the public hearing, and we'll begin with our --