

CHAIRPERSON: Representative Gregory
Haddad

SENATORS: Haskell, Hwang, Flexer,
Maroney, Slap

REPRESENTATIVES: Ackert, Arora, Betts,
Doucette, Green, Hall,
Mushinsky, Rochelle,
Simmons, Smith,
Sredzinski, Stallworth,
Turco, Wood, Ziogas

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I'm going to call the public hearing to order then. Thank you for being here. We have five bills on our agenda today. As is typically with the Higher Education Committee, we have a signup list for legislators and agency heads, a signup list for students, and a signup list for the general public. I think that the way that we will run this hearing today is we will start with the agency heads, but we will immediately start filtering in folks from the student list and after an hour, we will also begin to pull people off of the general public list and so the first person on the agenda signed up for today then would be Deborah, I'm going to, I have to apologize to everybody in advance for when I hack apart your name, Chyun? Chyun. Okay. Yes, it was completely confusing. She will be followed by from the student list, Alison Hagani, and then third up will be Jeanette Weldon. If you could identify yourself at the top of your testimony that would be helpful to the staff and thank you for being here.

DEBORAH CHYUN: Thank you. I am Deborah Chyun, a registered nurse and the Dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Connecticut. Thank you, members of the Committee, for this opportunity to present testimony on a matter of significant importance to the health of Connecticut residents, ensuring the sustainability of our nursing workforce in our state. I also thank you for your ongoing support of UConn and its School of Nursing.

Significant shortages of nurses at all levels - baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral, are projected over the next five years. Yet, in the academic setting where the preparation, training, and education of the next generation of nurses occurs, we are significantly limited in our ability to produce new practitioners because of a lack of preceptors for both nurses and master's prepared advanced practice registered nurses whom we call APRNs. Each semester at UConn we require at least 80 preceptors to work with our APRN students. Today, practicing clinicians are forced to see more patients than ever before and many report that supervising a student slows them down, decreasing their productivity and resulting in a financial loss. As a result, some colleges and universities resort to paying preceptors directly to offset this loss in revenue. This is not the best solution. So-called bidding wars are emerging where if one program offers an incentive of \$500 dollars, another program will respond by offering \$750 dollars or \$1,000 dollars or even more.

At UConn, the state's flagship public university, unlike private universities, we cannot pass these costs on to the students. As a result, since we are

committed to placing every student with a preceptor, we are forced to turn away qualified applicants every year. This year we will turn away 50 qualified APRN applicants. In turn, this limits the number of nurses who can obtain both master's and doctoral degrees, further perpetuating the nursing shortage.

There is a better way. The bill before you, House Bill 5014, is a solution to this problem. If passed, it would create a tax credit incentive to physicians, physician assistants, nurses, and APRNs who agree to serve as preceptors for the next generation of health care providers. It is a much more equitable solution to the problem than paying for preceptors. Tax credits are already the law in Hawaii, Maryland, Colorado, and Georgia. We urge the Connecticut General Assembly to pass this bill into law, supporting these clinicians who serve to supervise our nursing students across all levels, thus ensuring that the next generation of nurses and APRNs is sufficient to meet the needs of Connecticut's citizens. Thank you for your time.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you very much for your testimony. I'm surprised to see that you can actually quantify, I hadn't anticipated this. I heard that this was a problem but I'm surprised at you being able to quantify the number of applicants that you can turn away because of preceptors. This is a number that you say applies to APRNs. I imagine, I don't know, do you have a similar number for the number of bachelor of nursing students who might also have, you might have difficulty pairing with a preceptor?

DEBORAH CHYUN: The issue with the baccalaureate prepared nurses is not, at least for us at UConn, is not as extreme as for the master's prepared because what happens with the bachelor students, we have a clinical faculty member with them. The issue is for the bachelor students is we do not have enough faculty to take in as many bachelor degree students as we would like and so that limits us rather than the preceptors. It's the nursing faculty at the bachelor's level.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Right. I'll just pose a question to all the folks who about to testify in this that if you're also experience a shortage of faculty members, that would be interesting for this committee to hear about and it seems entirely in our wheelhouse to try to do what we can to address a shortage in faculty. There are solutions that have been proposed or presented in other states. I'd be interested in hearing a solution to that problem, but back to this one. Is um, have you had an opportunity, I don't know how recently the tax credits that have been passed in Hawaii, Maryland, Colorado, and Georgia have been implemented, but have you had an opportunity to talk to colleagues in any of those states who have indicated whether or not this is a solution that has generated the outcome that they're seeking to reach with the legislation?

DEBORAH CHYUN: Yeah, I think the tax credits have been passed relatively recently so it's probably too soon to tell, but we do know from our colleagues across the nation that this preceptor issue is not confined to Connecticut. It is really widespread and extremely problematic even for those of us who

are affiliated with an academic medical center where you would think that it would be easier for us to obtain preceptors.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Yeah. One last question before I open it up to my colleagues. In your, you actually have references on your testimony which you can tell this is an academic piece of testimony cause we don't usually get references and in this case, you actually cite a reference that's written by somebody named Haddad.

DEBORAH CHYUN: Yes, I saw that.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Yeah. I don't think it's a question. I just wanted to say Haddad's are apparently very smart people around the country. [laughter] That's good. We're very proud of that. Are there any other questions from members of the committee? Representative Turco.

REP. TURCO (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Dean-

DEBORAH CHYUN: Chyun.

REP. TURCO (27TH): Chyun?

DEBORAH CHYUN: Uh-huh.

REP. TURCO (27TH): Dean Chyun. Thank you, Dean Chyun. Can, so this proposed bill, it limits the tax credits for the preceptors for those students earning bachelor's, master's or doctorate degrees for nursing students. Can you tell me what is the difference in clinical hours required for a nursing student that gets an associate's degree to become a registered nurse versus the bachelor's, master's or doctorate degrees?

DEBORAH CHYUN: I'm not sure of the number of clinical hours and I believe they vary according to programs even across bachelor's or master's programs. For master's they tend to be regulated whereas for bachelor's and master's, they do not, but an associate's degree program is generally two years whereas a bachelor's is four years. Most master's programs are two years and then the doctorate is dependable.

REP. TURCO (27TH): Okay. What I'm trying to get an understanding and maybe some other people that testify on this bill today could also weigh in, for the actual clinical part that we're offering the tax credit for the preceptors that do at least 100 preceptorship hours, how that varies based on those different types of degrees and is it just as difficult to get a preceptor to spend that time for a nursing student who is getting an associate's degree as it is a nursing student who is getting a master's degree? Is it the same type of demand on the preceptor where we need to expand this bill to offer the credits for nursing students for associate's degree as well or is that mostly taken care of currently?

DEBORAH CHYUN: And my colleagues can certainly give their opinion. My opinion is that at the associate's and the bachelor's level, we are using adjunct or our own faculty. There is less need for a preceptor where at the master's level and the doctoral level, it's really a one-on-one preceptorship so it's not where a faculty member has six or eight students. It's a preceptor and a student so if we require about 80 preceptors a

semester, our students would generally have three semesters where they would require precepting.

REP. TURCO (27TH): I see. Thank you very much, Dean Chyun, for answering that and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to ask that question.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Are there any additional questions from members of the committee? Seeing none, we'll thank you very much for your testimony. We'll move on. As I announced earlier, Alison Hagani is next followed by Jeanette Weldon. You can proceed.

ALISON HAGANI: Okay. Hello. My name is Ali Hagani. Good morning and thank you, or good afternoon and thank you for taking testimony today. I'm testifying today in support of SB19, An Act Relating to Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses. I was born and raised in Connecticut and am currently a student at Brandeis University in Massachusetts. I am also one of the Connecticut Directors of Legislative Advocacy for the Every Voice Coalition.

SB-19 is the result of community collaboration, passion, and insight between legislators, students, and advocates across the State. We will be hearing from many of them today including representatives from the Connecticut Alliance to End Violence and students. This bill not only reflects the ideas and expertise of students and sexual violence advocates, but it continues such collaboration. The main aspect in the bill would require schools to administer a campus climate survey, which will gauge the incidence of sexual violence on college campuses

from the experiences and insights of community members themselves.

At my university, all violence prevention efforts center our routine campus climate survey. From the data collected in 2019, Brandeis University understands that our rates of sexual violence mirror national statistics. We also know that only 13percent of students who self-identify as having been impacted by violence reported their experiences to the university. Without this campus climate survey, my university would have only accounted for that 13percent, neglecting the scope of sexual violence on my campus and the necessity of immediate and more concentrated reform.

This one statistic alone has been instrumental in my university's reform efforts. Not only do we better understand the prevalence of sexual violence in our community, but the university has responded by reforming the accessibility of our Title IX offices, enhancing confidential support services, and more. Motivated by so many other eye-opening statistics and insights, my university uses the campus climate survey results to effectively advance efforts against sexual violence on campus. The proposed SB-19 would make this vital process a norm across the state of Connecticut. Furthermore, while SB-19 creates a base survey, universities also have the ability and flexibility to make their survey more specific to their own campus community.

When I was in my senior year of high school, I was sexually harassed by one of my teachers at my school. Those experiences stick with you and they too often complicate how you navigate your education. And even after the American Medical

Association has declared sexual violence a silent violent epidemic, the cycle continues, affecting so many students across the State and beyond. And part of this cycle is perpetuated by a lack of understanding and misdirected resources that fail to capture and respond to the breadth and scope of this issue on college campuses. SB-19 challenges this cycle.

Institutions have the ability to pass laws and enforce policies that can advance society and advocate on behalf of the people who need them the most. And beyond that, institutions have the power of sending a message. This bill does both; it sends a message of continued commitment to students and survivors in the State and more importantly, this bill changes lives for the better. In the best interest of students and survivors, I strongly urge you all to favorably report bill SB-19 out of committee. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Are there questions from members of the Committee? Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ali, thank you very much for your testimony. It was wonderful. It was very courageous of you to share your personal experience and the sentence that really stuck out with me was that to this day, it still impacts you and I think that's the importance for people to understand, that it is not a standalone incident when these happen. They have recurring and lasting impacts on an individual's health and wellbeing so I applaud you for raising the awareness and being here today. You speak very well for your colleagues and the advocacy so that's a compliment, but the other thing that I wanted to

share is this actually helped actually helped the school climate at your university and can you share some of the examples that have been impacted by having a study and being able to have anecdotal data as our universities readily depend on that? How did that change patterns of behavior and what was built in expectations so to speak?

ALISON HAGANI: Yeah. So again, Brandeis University is one university that could benefit from the results of such a survey. I know personally through my two years there and working at the prevention center on campus that we use the results to better direct our services so that when the 2015 Campus Climate Survey for Brandeis said that most individuals and an alarming amount of graduate students didn't know resources on campus, the university really amped up programming and funding for those resources. Another thing that the 2019 Campus Climate Survey tracked was an overwhelming increase in a student's ability to positively intervene in instances of violence and I mentioned in my testimony that universities can tailor their survey to their own specific community and one thing that Brandeis does is we do a lot of trainings on bystander intervention which I think isn't necessarily unique Brandeis. It's a new common emphasis on college campuses, but we were able to see that our trainings are making a substantial impact and furthermore, we also know which individuals are commonly and disproportionately affected by violence. We know in what settings and all of that provides us with the clarity to be able to make sure that our efforts are well directed in reaching the right people.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): And Brandeis began this in 2019. As you-

ALISON HAGANI: 2015.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): And your fellow advocates embark in the State of Connecticut, what has been your impression of our public and private college institutions? I can share with you from my experience they have been true advocates of being aware of this very important issue and a number of institutions that I've spoken to have developed climate surveys and have developed some aspect of amnesty and I think it really is a positive step forward. How would this contrast from what you have seen already from the positive feedback of our college and higher education institutions versus what you experience in Massachusetts?

ALISON HAGANI: Yeah, I mean I think it's unparalleled in Connecticut. I think an important thing to realize is that individual university rates mirror national statistics. Universities aren't exempt from like structures of power and control that lead to commonplace violence so it is an issue in Connecticut as it is an issue everywhere else, but engaging with this bill and drafting it and filing it and even today, Connecticut's super receptive to it in a way that I haven't seen before in other states, the advocacy that I've done, and I think that's super critical because it's essential that those in positions of power and those with the expertise and the insights believe in the efforts that we're pushing forward. It's a testament to this bill and it's also like a testament to the students in Connecticut who deserve all the advocacy and representation that they get but really,

advocacy and representation have to exist in implementation so as much as the process has been credible, we're really hoping that we can get it passed as soon as possible so we can affect and really positively change the lives of the students who need them the most.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): And I, I appreciate that. That's a very powerful statement and it's a compliment to the legislators but also our public and private colleges and their administration and what you've just said has been openly engage and supportive in this process which has been a pleasant surprise to you so I appreciate your acknowledgement of that and I truly do agree that as we begin this process, that we get to the finish line but I'm every encouraged by the dialogue and the receptiveness of all shareholders in this. So you've had a huge part in it and all of your peers have done a great job.

ALISON HAGANI: The alliance too.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Everybody engaged has been very positive so I'm really excited and I want to thank you, and Thank you, Mr. Chair for the time.

ALISON HAGANI: Thank you so much.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Are there any additional questions? Representative Arora.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Thank you so much for you testimony and one question I had is that if you step back and said, and listened to what's proposed in the bill, is there other ideas you may have to which are in some sense quite, come to quite, you think about, which you think could be very effective in

addressing the same challenge we are trying to solve here, improve the climate as well as improve the -- in some sense make sure that it is clear to one and all that this is not acceptable and we go on and we improve the overall climate of the campuses? Is there anything else that comes to mind which the committee should think about perhaps in this bill or other bills? Thank you.

ALISON HAGANI: No. I'm very pleased with this bill in its entirety. The only thing that I'm wary of is the representation of the task force. As you know, in the bill it outlines specific representatives who will create that base survey and oversee this process. I would just encourage the committee to think about how they can make that task force as representative to individuals in Connecticut and also to individuals impacted by violence because as we all know, specific populations and identities and intersecting identities experience violence at higher rates so I think it's important that that task force, when put into like, put into place and assigned members has that representation at the forefront.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Anything specific in terms of how the task -- your ideas in terms of how the taskforce should -- who should be on the taskforce? Who you don't see on that?

ALISON HAGANI: I think that they should be a representative for individuals of color. I don't think that we have one that's specifically outlined in the taskforce. Other than that, I think the taskforce is pretty holistic to the identities that are impacted. We have somebody that will represent individuals impacted by LGB or individuals of the

LGBTQ plus community who are impacted. Not to say that only one person should advocate on behalf of those individuals but I think it's important that in its, in its implementation that we have a voice in there so that's the only thing that I can think of that I would, I would gear to the expertise of the Connecticut Alliance who will you hear from and other representatives as well.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Any additional questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

ALISON HAGANI: Thank you so much.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): The next person on the sign-up list is Jeanette Weldon and she will be followed by Nora Gallo.

JEANETTE WELDON: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Jeanette W. Weldon and I am speaking on behalf of the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority also known as CHESLA. CHESLA is a subsidiary of the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority, and I am speaking in support of Raised Bill No. 18, an act requiring the Connecticut higher education supplemental loan authority to establish a student loan subsidy program.

CHESLA is a quasi-public agency whose mission is to expand higher educational opportunities and enhance the State's economic development through higher education by providing cost-effective education financing programs and information resources to Connecticut students, alumni and their families. Connecticut has one of the highest rates of college

participation in the country, but unfortunately, many of our new college graduates are leaving Connecticut and according to recent U.S. census data, more than 17,000 young adults between the ages of 20 and 24 left Connecticut in 2014 after getting their diplomas in Connecticut. Connecticut was also ranked the 12th worst state within the U.S. when it comes to students leaving.

According to a May 2017 Office of Policy and Management report entitled *Connecticut's Population and Migration Trends: A Multi-Data Source Dive*, the number of domestic out-migrants in the 22-29-year-old age group has increased compared to pre-recession levels. Raised Bill No. 18 addresses this problem by incentivizing Connecticut's graduates to stay in Connecticut and establish their careers here. If this bill is passed, recent graduates choosing to reside in Connecticut will be able to access a reduced student loan interest rate. These interest rate subsidies will have a direct and positive impact on the incomes of new graduates. These low or no-interest loans would be relatively simple to implement since they would use administrative infrastructure that CHESLA already has in place.

The level of interest subsidy can also be tailored to impact a targeted number of students. In future years, CHESLA could potentially partner with private companies interested in providing matching funds to expand the program. I thank the Committee for the opportunity to offer this testimony and urge support for Raised Bill 18 and I would be happy to answer any questions.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Senator Haskell?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much, Jeanette, for your advocacy on this issue and your work with CHESLA. It's been a pleasure to work with you on a variety of issues and I so appreciate the passion you bring to making sure that our recent graduates stay in Connecticut to start their careers, their small businesses, their families, all things of that nature. A quick question. Last year, a similar bill was raised in this committee but it was more narrowly tailored to graduates in the STEM field as I recall, but this year thanks to your advocacy, we're launching I think a broader bill to help students regardless of their course of study in college. Could you explain to committee members why you think it's important that this bill include students regardless of what they happened to study while they were an undergraduate?

JEANETTE WELDON: Sure. In the course of the last session as we spoke to different organizations, we got a lot of feedback about why not broaden the bill to include other fields rather than just STEM fields. So for example, we heard feedback about what about teacher recruitment and isn't this a tool that could be used to perhaps bring you know new teachers or retain teachers in this state and then generally we heard on the economic development side just general interest in retaining recent grads and young talent generally and not limiting it to specific fields so given that, we thought we would submit the bill this session with a broadened approach.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much and if I may, Mr. Chair, just one more question. You touched on it at the end of your answer, the economic

development component. I think sometimes in this building there's the belief that student loan debt is a young person's issue, but actually we know and I'm sure you know from your work with CHESLA that student loan debt can stay with students many, many years after they graduate and hamper the entirety of our economy as employers go out and look for skilled, talented graduates. Could you talk a little bit about why this is important for rejuvenating Connecticut's business climate?

JEANETTE WELDON: Sure. I think in order -- you know as, as has been noted on the economic development front there are many career paths and positions that are not being filled due to lack of a skilled workforce staying in the state and so we think that this bill helps, will help to retain those students who otherwise are going to look out of state for other opportunities and I think while, you know, student debt is certainly a critical issue and it can be a burden, in many instances at CHESLA we certainly view it as you know it's not the soul way to finance your education. It's a tool that can be used among other tools and at CHESLA we're trying to make the tool as useful and palatable to those students who are seeking to further their education.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much for your answers and for being today and for the work that you and your colleagues do at CHESLA. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

JEANETTE WELDON: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for being here and talking about this. It's

intriguing. I know we started it last year in the higher ed. You know, can you give us an idea as to what you believe the value of this would be in terms of a dollar amount on somebody? When you say it could lower interest rates, what are we thinking that we think a student would -- and you don't, I mean, you don't have to give me an exact -- I'm just curious and the reason why I sequeway this is cause I created, when I first came into this ten years ago, I put in a bill that if you stayed here for four years that your, and you worked here, your income tax, state income tax would be, a return would be put towards your loans so that you had no state income taxes if you stayed in Connecticut after working here. So kind of like you know learn here, live here program that we've done in different manners so what I'm trying to think is, this is a nice step. I think that we could go, we could do more. I think that but we'll talk about with the committee more but can you kind of give me some sense of what you think it might help the student?

JEANETTE WELDON: Uh, sure. So the scenario you know we've just roughly looked at different scenarios. So for example right now our in-school student loan rate is 5.15percent so if through this program we were able to reduce that loan rate to 2percent so that's cutting, you know that's more than a 50percent reduction in the interest rate so that would have significant dollar impact per student and we also looked at how many students might we be able to assist. The bill actually says that by this date, that would then support the subsidy of up to \$15 million dollars and we think, and looking at cutting it to 2percent we think we might be able to impact about 2500 students at that

level and that's assuming loans outstanding of \$25,000 dollars per student.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you very much. That's what I was looking for. I appreciate that answer and look forward to more dialogue on this. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you, Representative Ackert. Representative Turco.

REP. TURCO (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and it's good to see you, Ms. Weldon. Did I get that correct?

JEANETTE WELDON: Yes.

REP. TURCO (27TH): Is that 2percent a hypothetical or is that [crosstalk].

JEANETTE WELDON: That's a hypothetical. Right. So as the bill states, the details would be worked out with the Office of Policy and Management in terms of how it might be structured and how to broaden the impact or target the impact would all be part of those discussions.

REP. TURCO (27TH): I see and does the student, after they graduate from a college or university in Connecticut, do they have to be employed first to then apply for this interest rate or just commit to staying here in Connecticut?

JEANETTE WELDON: The way we're envisioning the program, they would obtain a job in Connecticut and then they would be able, they would be eligible to apply to this program. They would be committing to continuing to work in Connecticut for five years. Each year we would go -- there'd be administrative

process for them to verify and us to verify with their employer, yes, they are still in fact working in the state and then the rate, the reduced rate would continue and then you know one scenario we looked at is once you hit that five-year mark, then it's just permanently reduced.

REP. TURCO (27TH): Oh. Okay. And are these only for students who originated their loan with CHESLA or could a student that got their loan from a private bank somewhere else then refinance with you and then receive this loan if they qualified?

JEANETTE WELDON: It could be applicable also to a CHESLA refinance loan so if a student had for example a Sally Mae loan, they could refinance upon graduation into a CHESLA loan and then if they had a job in Connecticut that CHESLA refinance loan could be eligible for this program as well.

REP. TURCO (27TH): Okay. And just one more question if it's okay, Mr. Chairman. Just curious if a student only lives in Connecticut four years and then moves to another state, is there any kind of penalty they have to pay back, the difference between those interest rates?

JEANETTE WELDON: The concept now is that they wouldn't be paying back the difference but that it would revert to the original rate for the remain, you know at the time that they leave Connecticut.

REP. TURCO (27TH): Okay. Thank, thank you very much. I'm very excited with what you're trying to do here and I hope to be able to support your efforts. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

JEANETTE WELDON: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Representative Maroney.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you, Representative Haddad. Thank you for testifying, Jeanette. I have a question. So it sounds like you can clarify one of my questions in that in essence this is a refinance loan because it's for students who've already graduated school and they're starting their careers, correct?

JEANETTE WELDON: Well it could be for a student who took out a regular CHESLA loan while they were in school, then they graduate, they get a job in Connecticut, they commit to staying in Connecticut five years and at that point, the loan rate on their, the loan that they received while they were an undergraduate would be reduced as long as they're in Connecticut for those five years.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): And so you could apply this to an existing CHESLA loan or you could [crosstalk].

JEANETTE WELDON: Correct. Correct.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Refinance your federal direct loans into a CHESLA finance [crosstalk].

JEANETTE WELDON: Or your --

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Federal PLUS loan.

JEANETTE WELDON: The PLUS loan or another type of private loan.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): But the underwriting, it will still be based on debt to income ratio and so the person who is applying for this loan, they would still need a co-signer if they didn't have the requisite debt-to-income ratio?

JEANETTE WELDON: So the in -- for the in-school product for students while in school, we would not be changing our underwriting criteria with this program. So the 43percent debt to income ratio would continue to be in place for students while they were in school and likelihood therefore of having parents as a co-borrower on the refinance side is slight, there is slightly different criteria. It's, uh, there are different terms that are available as options, five, ten or 15 and there are also FICO scores involved on the refinance side.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Now given that your interest rates are already relatively low compared to a lot of the other student loan products, has there been any thought to underwriting some of the risks so that people who didn't have the resident debt-to-income ratio or a co-signer could qualify for these loans?

JEANETTE WELDON: Well we are -- not in conjunction with this particular proposal but we are generally giving thought to are there ways we might be able to structure a different programs perhaps for you know related but slightly different purposes that maybe would involve some sort of loan loss reserve or something along those lines.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): And then I noticed that lines 17 to 24, you know you sign an MOU with the Office of Policy and Management and they would determine the employment positions that qualify. Has there been any thought at using the Governor's Workforce Council since they're sort of tasked with streamlining all of our workforce development to make sure that we're working in concert with them

for the careers that you're targeting these loans towards?

JEANETTE WELDON: Right. We, um, that hadn't come to mind but I think that's a good suggestion. I mean we would probably solicit their feedback in any event.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Okay. Thank you and just one last thing so in terms of workforce, I know the CHESLA loan is one of the few loans you can actually use for certificate programs, right? If you're not getting --

JEANETTE WELDON: Correct.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): An associates or a bachelor's degree. Have we looked at all doing some sort of a subsidy for those high-value certificates again trying to relieve that requirement for a co-signer or alleviate you know the debt to income ratio so that we can get more students into these high-value certificate programs.

JEANETTE WELDON: Right I um -- for the certificate programs I think that would probably be in the same context that we're looking at, you know some other types of programs which again would be if we are able to establish some sort of loan loss reserve such that if the underwriting criteria are loosened a bit, we still have a source of backup dollars.

SENATOR MARONEY (14TH): Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you, Senator Maroney.
Representative Arora.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Thank you for your testimony. I have two questions. Number one, the \$15 million

dollars raised from the state, would that be the amount which is used for the loans or would that be the amount of interest subsidy?

JEANETTE WELDON: That would be the amount of interest subsidy. So CHESLA issues bonds directly and the bonds, those bonds are an obligation of CHESLA although they are, you know there's a reserve fund mechanism that pulls in some, that pulls in effectively a state guarantee but the guarantee has never been drawn on since CHESLA's inception in the 1980s. So we issue bonds, we fund the loans --

REP. ARORA (151ST): Okay.

JEANETTE WELDON: And then these additional dollars would be --

REP. ARORA (151ST): I understand.

JEANETTE WELDON: To make up that difference.

REP. ARORA (151ST): So if the, if the increased subsidy is let's say 3percent, that's what you're thinking? As a result of this we're saying additional loans which you are going to refinance are about half a billion dollars? Is that right? Am I reading this right?

JEANETTE WELDON: No. The, well yeah in terms of the principal amount --

REP. ARORA (151ST): Of the loans?

JEANETTE WELDON: Uh, it could be, yeah. I would have to run the numbers to see what \$15 million dollars' worth of interest would be in terms of loan principal.

REP. ARORA (151ST): So yeah, no, I just said if it's a 3percent subsidy I just divide it by 3percent so that's like 33 times that so that's about \$500 million dollars or half a billion dollars. So the question I have is, I think there's about \$9 billion dollars of loans outstanding for student loans here. We're saying we're going to subsidize half a billion of those under this program. What happens to the other eight and a half? They're just too unlucky?

JEANETTE WELDON: Okay. So we're only speaking of CHESLA loans so right now CHESLA has about \$150 million dollars of loans outstanding so this would not have any impact or would not be in relation to federal loans or any other loans outstanding, only CHESLA loans. So right now CHESLA has about \$150 million dollars' worth of loans outstanding.

REP. ARORA (151ST): So if CHESLA has \$150 million dollars of loans outstanding, then the \$15-million-dollar number looks very large because then it should you know literally be \$2 million dollars if you're going to give a 3percent subsidy.

JEANETTE WELDON: But this is for ongoing future loans and it's over you know the life of the loan so these are 140-month term loans on the in school side so it's over the life of the loan and it's, we would, we're always every year making new loans so that's what's currently outstanding but this would be ongoing additional loans going forward.

REP. ARORA (151ST): I see. You're saying it's 3percent subsidy let's say every year so this is over let's say ten years [crosstalk].

JEANETTE WELDON: Correct.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Large number of years.

JEANETTE WELDON: Correct.

REP. ARORA (151ST): So this cost to the state would be not \$15 million dollars per year, it would be \$15 million dollars over a decade or something like that?

JEANETTE WELDON: Well it would be over the term of the loan, yes.

REP. ARORA (151ST): The term of the loan. Okay. You know the only skepticism I have is that you know considering that you're only focused on CHESLA loans, you know we need to as a legislature focus on loans made by every single federal agency as well as others rather than just a very narrow segment because you serve \$150 million dollars out of \$9 billion dollars' worth of loans outstanding for students in Connecticut so every solution should be focused a little more holistically rather than very focused on one segment.

JEANETTE WELDON: Right. Well that's why we offer the refinance product and with the CHESLA refinance product, we can refinance any type of loan including a federal PLUS loan which is the parent loan. We can refinance that so that the parent can come off the loan after the student graduates. We can refinance any other private loan so as we grow the market the refinance product has been in place about four or five years. As we grow that, that's an opportunity to have impacts on other types of borrowing.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Representative Smith.

REP. B. SMITH (48TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have there been any consider -- you mention that you, that the scope of the loan program is being expanded beyond to other fields, was there any thought given to whether or not it might be used as a tool to sort of incentivize people for some areas where we maybe have historically been under-represented? You mentioned teachers for example. Would there be any consideration or would it be feasible to have maybe a larger subsidy to encourage minority teachers to or minority students to go into the field of teaching and stay in the state and do that to help sort of make up some of the gaps we have in the representation in the schools?

JEANETTE WELDON: I do think there'd be the opportunity to target it in specific ways and I think determining what those specifics would be would be in conjunction with OPM and discussions with others like the workforce, the Governor's Workforce Council as has been mentioned.

REP. B. SMITH (48TH): Thank you. Just one other question if I may. What about a student who goes to school, graduates and then you know goes somewhere else for a while? For example, maybe they go into the military for a number of years and then they come back and they're ready to start their careers. Is this only for recent graduates or somebody in that situation that came back in after being in the military? Would they have the opportunity to take their then-existing student loans and roll them into this program?

JEANETTE WELDON: Yeah. At this point, those types of details have not been determined so I think there could be the opportunity to allow for you know that

deferment period of while the person is serving and then come back and still be eligible. I think that should be doable if that's how the program becomes structured.

REP. B. SMITH (48TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you and just as a point of clarification, I wanted to go back to one of your earlier answers. If the program was limited to as much as \$15 million dollars in bonding, do you think that you could help, you could impact 2500 student loan holders?

JEANETTE WELDON: Correct. That's just a ballpark figure at this point but that's based on some of the assumptions we were making in terms of loan size.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And so I'm just doing very rough arithmetic but if you divide \$15 million dollars by 2500 students, it comes to about \$6000 dollars apiece and so the \$6000 dollars would be the amount of avoided interest costs that they would incur over the lifetime of their loan if they participated in this program.

JEANETTE WELDON: Uh-huh.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): That's roughly what we're talking about.

JEANETTE WELDON: Uh, I think that would be another way you could look at it, yes.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And let me just say like mean I -- what -- there are a couple of initiatives in this committee that ultimately I might support but I will just say that it's, it's frustrating to see how hard

it is to scale these programs to something that would impact a measurable number of people in the State of Connecticut given the number of people who have outstanding loans.

JEANETTE WELDON: Uh-huh.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I think this is a little bit Representative Arora's district or of his point, I'm sorry, and it, I think it really does speak to, you know the need for some of these issues to be addressed at the federal level and not just at the state level but we'll see what we can do here in Connecticut. Are there any additional questions or comments? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony. I'm sorry. See I had my reading glasses on and I couldn't see you. Representative Stallworth.

REP. STALLWORTH (126TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would pass mine but they're not any better so they won't help you. Just hearing about the small pool and the concept of federal loans being so broad and ideal to refinance, what's the impact of this on minority graduates?

JEANETTE WELDON: I think the, well to the extent that for example -- well these would not be minority graduates in Connecticut per se but for example, HBCUs have had I believe very high use of the PLUS loan by many parents of students attending HBCUs. So if those students, let's say there was some sort of you know minority teacher recruitment program built into this and those students came to Connecticut and were able to participate in this as an incentive, it would be an opportunity to refinance out of the PLUS loan which despite the

fact that it is a federal loan, it carries an interest rate of over 7percent so they would be able to refinance into a lower interest rate CHESLA product which would then be made more attractive by this interest rate subsidy.

REP. STALLWORTH (126TH): Just one followup. I just want to make sure I understand clearly. It would have no impact on minority graduates? Did I hear you clearly?

JEANETTE WELDON: What I'm saying, I was using an example with minority teacher recruitment. That's the example I was using and so those are minority graduates that are coming, I was utilizing HBCUs as an example but if you wanted to target something using minority teacher recruitment, that would be one opportunity for using the program in that way, using the incentive in that specific way.

REP. STALLWORTH (126TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Are there any additional questions? Representative Simmons.

REP. SIMMONS (144TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for your testimony and for all of your good work at CHESLA. Just a couple of questions. I'm wondering what percent of the student loan market does CHESLA cover approximately?

JEANETTE WELDON: Yeah, it's a small percentage. I don't know, you know, less than 3percent if I were just throwing a number out. You know we are in what we view as a growth mode. CHESLA on average makes about \$25 million dollars' worth of loans to Connecticut students each year. We are you know seeking to build awareness of CHESLA. We're doing a

lot of outreach to schools, a lot of college fairs. We've met with the State Department of Education and doing a lot of outreach through that, uh, through the Commissioner's efforts so we're trying to increase awareness. It is a product that's definitely beneficial to Connecticut residents and building our market share is very important.

REP. SIMMONS (144TH): Great and just kind of following up on Representative Haddad's question, if we wanted to bolster, enhance this bill to further support your efforts to reach more students, is there anything you would recommend?

JEANETTE WELDON: Well I think reaching more students with this bill is obviously a function of CHESLA reaching more students in general and having more CHESLA loans outstanding so certainly the more we can market the greater awareness that can be built. That means there would be more students with CHESLA loans who would then become eligible for this program.

REP. SIMMONS (144TH): Great. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Representative Wood.

REP. T. WOOD (141ST): Thank you, Mr. Chair and thank you. I've certainly been listening to the debate here. Can you tell me what the budget, annual budget is for CHESLA?

JEANETTE WELDON: CHESLA's annual budget is in the range of, on an operating side in the range of \$750,000 dollars to \$1 million dollars so on the operating side, it is not you know it is not a large

operation. The trust which is the entity that holds the loans and the bonds is separate, you know is a separate self-contained trust that has its own expenses but in terms of CHESLA's staff and CHESLA's marketing and CHESLA's operation, that's about the size of the budget.

REP. T. WOOD (141ST): Funds that are in the trust part of CHESLA, that comes directly as revenue from the state?

JEANETTE WELDON: No. There is no revenue from the state so the trust holds the bonds that are issued by CHESLA and it holds the loans that CHESLA makes. Loan repayments go to pay off the bonds so it's just held in trust for bondholders and CHESLA does not use any state dollars for its operations. We do not receive any state or taxpayer funding. It's a self-supporting organization.

REP. T. WOOD (141ST): Is it considered quasi-public?

JEANETTE WELDON: It is a quasi-public, yes, it is.

REP. T. WOOD (141ST): Okay.

JEANETTE WELDON: But it's one that you know we're not state employees, we don't use state benefits and we don't receive taxpayer dollars.

REP. T. WOOD (141ST): Great. Thank you. I appreciate that information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Are there any additional questions? Representative Doucette.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks for sticking with us, Jeanette. Just have a couple of quick questions on the mechanics. So I'm

assuming that the way this would be structured is that the reduced rate would be built into the loan documentation and then if, and then there'd be sort of an annual recertification process. If at some time the borrower did not meet the eligibility criteria then the rate would sort of revert back to the default or the, what rate would it revert back to?

JEANETTE WELDON: Well it would revert back to the original rate. So their original loan documentation if they were a student in school would not include this program. Upon graduating and getting a job in Connecticut, they would then execute an additional document that would you know recognize their participation in this program and the reduced interest rate that they are eligible for and if they don't meet the obligation of staying in state, then it would revert to their original interest rate when they took out the loan?

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): And that rate would then, would go into effect immediately? So if -- as soon as repayment begins, if I'm employed and I meet all the criteria and I've committed to say, that rate would be in effect as soon as the loan repayment?

JEANETTE WELDON: As soon as practicable, yes.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): Okay. So I guess a question would be would we want to set up the five years -- if a borrower didn't make it the full five years and again, is only eligible for the first three years, I guess the question is would they be able to take advantage of that rate while they're in repayment and then it would revert back or would we somehow

have some mechanism to sort of claw it back in other words or to --

JEANETTE WELDON: We, the whole thing would only occur in repayment so when they're in school, none of this would be applicable because you only become eligible after you graduate and get the job.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): Right, right. No, my point is so I only stay, I commit to stay five years, I'm getting the reduced interest rate while in the first two years of repayment but then I move out of state.

JEANETTE WELDON: Right.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): Would there be, is it contemplated that we would have some way to sort of recoup the interest subsidy for those first two years if they didn't meet, I guess that's a question [crosstalk].

JEANETTE WELDON: Yeah, it's not currently contemplated but you know I suppose as we go through the mechanics, anything could be possible.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): Just to create an incentive -
-

JEANETTE WELDON: It could be, it could be administratively burdensome but it's something we could look at, sure.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): Okay. Do we currently have any similar intra-subsidy programs with CHESLA of this kind or no?

JEANETTE WELDON: We do not although as I mentioned, the CHESLA loan rate is a very cost-effective rate and is below many other private loans as well as the Federal PLUS loan.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): Okay. And the idea is that again, we touched on this already, that this would increase the market share for CHESLA by being able to offer a product with this sort of incentive theoretically we would be increasing the number of CHESLA loans, increasing the number of CHESLA borrowers --

JEANETTE WELDON: Correct.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): And growing the program.

JEANETTE WELDON: Correct.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): All right. Thank you.

JEANETTE WELDON: You're welcome.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Did everybody on the committee get a chance to ask a question? [laughter] Just asking. Anybody else want to ask a question? Do you have another question? Representative Smith for the second time.

REP. B. SMITH (48TH): Thank you. I know I'm supposed to not say anything. Just, it's really just a clarification. So if I understand correctly, these are revenue bonds and the revenue is pledged or the revenue is derived from the loans that you write.

JEANETTE WELDON: Correct.

REP. B. SMITH (48TH): And that's the sole source of payment.

JEANETTE WELDON: Yes.

REP. B. SMITH (48TH): Thank you.

JEANETTE WELDON: And as I said there is an indirect, there is a state guarantee mechanism which has never been drawn on.

REP. B. SMITH (48TH): Right. But they're not general obligation [crosstalk], right?

JEANETTE WELDON: No, they are not.

REP. B. SMITH (48TH): Okay. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And to belabor the point but just to clarify that if the \$15 million dollars is bonded according to this legislation, those likely would be general obligation bonds?

JEANETTE WELDON: Correct. Correct.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Okay. So that's where the public subsidy to the program, to your, your privately financed program would begin, right?

JEANETTE WELDON: Correct.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): All right. Thank you. Any addition, I guess I should have just moved on. Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be very quick. Ms. Weldon, thank you very much for your work and your outreach to all members of this committee and your explanation has been very much appreciated by me so I wanted to publicly acknowledge your outreach but also your very good work on behalf to the citizens and students of this state so thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

JEANETTE WELDON: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Seeing no further questions, thank you very much for your testimony.

JEANETTE WELDON: Okay. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): The next, I previously called Nora Gallo from the student list who is coming up, go ahead. After that I'm going to call one other student from the student list, John Gabrieli and then we will be moving to the general public list as well. I also just wanted to share the bad news for two members of the public who signed up on the wrong list, they signed up on the legislator agency and municipal officials list, you won't be first on the public list but you won't be last. At some point I'll work your names into the general flow but this Nora Gallo I guess and you're welcome to testify.

NORA GALLO: Thank you. Good afternoon Senator Haskell and Representative Haddad and honorable members of the Committee of Higher Education and Employment Advancement. Thank you for being here today. My name is Nora Gallo. I'm here to testify in strong favor of all aspects of SB 19, An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses.

I grew up in Amherst, Massachusetts and currently attend UMass, Amherst and although I am not a constituent of any of you, I speak on behalf, as a survivor, as a student, as a representative of the Every Voice Coalition and most importantly, I write this as a friend. I know that this is not going to be as lighthearted as the last testimony because exactly one week ago on Thursday, a very close friend of mine and a student of a Connecticut college disclosed to me that she was raped. I dedicate this testimony to her.

As students, we put our education, trust, dedication, and future into the hands of our chosen

colleges, universities, and the states in which they reside. When I opened my letter of acceptance I was excited and also relieved, yet I speak on behalf of students to express that when we post to our Facebooks the schools that we are dedicating our student careers to, we should not be dedicating our lives to a life-sentence of trauma. Not every student will experience sexual assault, but for those who do, the violation is life-altering.

The truth is, as survivors, the very essence and passion that drove us to pursue a degree crumbles before us. After my own assault, I withdrew from five classes and received low marks in many others. I contemplated dropping out of college, moving away from a town I grew up in, and in my most desperate moments, I contemplated taking my own life. I was the victim of sexual assault, but what I survived was the aftermath. I wish I trusted that my school had a higher standard of safety, but my story is like so many others. The first section of this bill, and I'll speak on behalf of the amnesty policy, holds institutions of higher education to a greater standard statewide. After I was raped I did not know what to do or who to turn to. I blamed myself for drinking beyond the point of memory retention, and afraid that would be used against me if I came forward to report. To my core, I believed that the assault that kept me from sleeping, broke my connection to safety in my own body, and disrupted my college career would not be seen as valid in the eyes of anyone I disclosed my assault to.

The provisions in this bill include ensuring that students understand being intoxicated will not be

held against them. The current lack of this provision encompasses a culture of rape that has not been addressed with the action that we seek today. Having a policy written detailing the definition of rape will give a voice to victims who feel that their story will not be seen as valid in the eyes of the administration. I dedicate this testimony to myself, because every time I stand up and demand more for the next generation of college students, I regain a piece of myself that was taken from me and I regain my voice. I dedicate this testimony to my close friend who was raped one week ago today. I want her to go to school in a state that puts campus safety as a top priority. I dedicate this testimony to every student who believed their college experience would not include a violation of their basic human rights. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I want to thank you for your testimony and thank you for your courage in coming and sharing it. You know these are difficult issues to talk about sometimes but it's important that you know that we're listening --

NORA GALLO: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And that we'll do everything we can to create a better climate on our college campuses and so thank you very much for coming in.

NORA GALLO: I will say that I am impressed by the receptiveness of Connecticut state legislature in regard to these issues.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. We've worked very hard over a number of years I think to do a number of issues and I even saw in your testimony a couple of things that you dropped out were things that

we've adopted here in Connecticut like Affirmative Consent as the standard of consent and some of that is at risk because of some of the proposals that are being made at the federal level. We understand the Department of Education will be coming through with some additional regulatory guidelines and we will be very vigilant in protecting the advancements that we've made here in Connecticut policy as much as we can in the event that what is eventually adopted in Washington conflicts with our own policies but we do that because we have heard from lots of students just like you who have had bad experiences to say the least on college campuses and we want to make sure that we're doing everything that we can to make sure that we have safe environments on our college campuses. Are there any additional questions or comments? Representative Hall.

REP. C. HALL (59TH): First, I'd like to commend you in coming today and testifying. This isn't an easy subject to talk about privately and it's even harder publicly so I commend you for being as brave as you are to be here. Obviously, this means a lot to you and it means a lot to us as legislators to hear from victims and your advocacy is well received. Thank you for the courage to be here today and testify. I appreciate that. Thank you.

NORA GALLO: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Nora, thank you so much for your eloquence and bravery in sharing your story and also that of your friend's, and also thank you for being a resource on campuses. We try our best in this building to make a difference but of course,

it's students on the front lines who are reaching out to survivors and forging those connections in the wake of that trauma. I just wanted to give you an opportunity to talk about the Campus Climate Survey as well. You focused your testimony on amnesty and I'm so grateful that you brought to your attention how important that provision is, but Representative Haddad mentioned that Connecticut has made great strides over the last few years before I got to the legislature but the Campus Climate Survey I think also allows us to check in on how effective those reforms have been. Did you want to say a few words about that?

NORA GALLO: Absolutely. I love the Campus Climate Survey because it offers sort of an inside look as we look towards the colleges we're applying for and you know when we get that letter of acceptance, as students we're absolutely ecstatic to be able to have the opportunity to pursue a degree, but also for our parents to be able to know that the place that they're sending us to school as we you know kind of fly the coop and leave the next, that they know we are going to be somewhere that's safe and we do know the nationwide statistics of one in five women, undergraduate women, and then also one in ten students will be sexually assaulted while they are in college, but we really need to be able to kind of get to the nitty gritty of like specific state by state, region by region, college by college to be able to really address the issue. There was, there was something raised earlier today I believe at the cross conference related to issues regarding do you think that there's different statistics college by college, and we do not know that because we do not have access to that information yet because the

Campus Climate Survey is not you know mandated for each college. But I would say that each college has a different college on campus relating to the specific policies at the campus and laws statewide just because of the atmosphere. I mean I go to college; I understand the atmosphere around rape culture on my own campus and the way that the administration addresses and without transparency, there can be no change cause you can't fix anything without knowing what the problem is.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much for your answer. Thank you for being here today.

NORA GALLO: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to follow along the long of that survey. As I mentioned earlier, a number of our schools in Connecticut have conducted climate surveys and I believe the bill's language is every two years. How would you feel about the idea of maybe extending the survey to three or four years, but at the same time, encouraging the schools to develop a comprehensive ongoing awareness program cause I think that has to be a real awareness constantly to just take the survey and then execute that? Would you be receptive to that kind of a process because it is all about the execution and raising awareness and putting a survey and putting it into use as we heard earlier?

NORA GALLO: Every two years is necessary because if you were to extend that to say four years, there's a whole, you know you kind of look at each class of students as a different generation. It's this whole

part of the population that goes to school that misses the opportunity to be able to express their experiences on campus and I think you know no matter what, there needs to be really comprehensive education surrounding prevention and services regarding sexually assault and the culture that surrounds it but it's really necessary for something to be comprehensive and also occur biannually just to be able to get the full scope of the problem and that if you're doing it so broadly it's -- things change year by year and class by class.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): And that's good feedback, thank you very much and I just simply wanted to reiterate again as you will hear repeatedly from others, your courage in sharing your story and your extension on behalf of your friend and being a voice to her.

NORA GALLO: There are so many people who can't speak up and I found myself in the shoes where I feel the power to do so because of the coalition that I am a part of supports me in that and if I can speak up on behalf of survivors who don't feel like they found their voice yet, I will do it every single time.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): And I truly believe that every time you do so you reclaim a little bit back of --

NORA GALLO: I do.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): What someone took away and that sense of empowerment is critical. Not only are you doing this for yourself which is incredible, but you're doing it in raising a voice for yourself. I'm sure your friend has, she's listening to this or

sees this recording, she knows that someone out there is fighting for her, someone out there is believing in her. That's important. I also want to add one component that doesn't get a lot of context here because they may not be here. I'm a parent of a 25-year-old daughter and as I listen to all of you, and I have a 21-year-old son, and as I hear these kind of experiences, don't forget the feeling that a parent must go through to know that a child is at college, that they want them to be safe. I just can't even imagine as a parent when I hear that story and the vulnerability that I know that I can't protect my child, it's the worst feeling in the world. So if we can, to be on the lookout for parents and for young adults like you, hopefully to enjoy the most wonderful moments of your life, let us help you in that. So thank you very much for your time and your testimony is very, very powerful.

NORA GALLO: Thank you.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you, Senate Hwang.
Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon. Thank you very much, Nora, for your testimony here today and like my colleagues who spoke previously, you have a bravery that I can't fully comprehend so thank you very much for coming forward today and sharing your story in an effort to make sure we're doing everything we can as policymakers to ensure that students in the future don't have to endure what you've had to go through and thank you for telling yours story so powerfully. I just wanted to add one other thing to this

conversation. You referenced in your testimony that you grew up in Massachusetts and you currently attend school there and I've been lucky to serve on this committee for a number of years and there's a lot of regional collaboration in New England around higher educational issues and I just wanted to pass along to you that in my experience, Massachusetts is -- you don't get the experience, you don't get the feedback that you're getting here today that you have in Connecticut, that there isn't a push to be at the forefront of policymaking that's addressing the serious issue of sexually assault on college campuses and so I would just encourage you to think about that and think about what your path might be to changing that in Massachusetts if you know what I mean.

NORA GALLO: Thank you.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH): Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Are there any additional questions? Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two questions. I had a constituent who was assaulted at UConn and you know my town is a fairly quiet little town. We're not a lot, there's not a lot of danger in my town of Wallingford and she was taken off guard, didn't expect the culture to be dangerous for her because she had never experienced that back home. So on your primary prevention programming, are you going to, are you thinking of something that will help a student who has not been away from home before to understand what is a danger zone and how they have to have their antenna up to be alert and not be attacked on campus which they

wouldn't be expecting necessarily if they've lived in a sheltered environment before? So that's the first question.

NORA GALLO: I just want to iterate the importance of using the word attacked in the terms of sexual assault. Very often, it is not an attack. It is somebody that the victim knows intimately, a friend, a partner, so in terms of relating to prevention education around making people aware of kind of safety zones on their campus or you know what to kind of expect, it should be included in a sense that it's very, the push is to make students aware that sexual assault is not tolerated on the campus at all and that it should not be. Although it is in our hands to you know don't get assaulted, it still happens and it really needs to be, the push needs to be put on that there's no toleration of sexual assault if that answers our question.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Your issue is more educating the perpetrator than the victim whereas I'm trying to get some help for the victim so they know. You know in his particular case, the person was trapped in a room and you know a more experienced student might say well I don't want to go in a room where I can't get out again because it might be, I might have to get out quickly and this situation is going to leave me no way out whereas a freshman might not know that and they might be more vulnerable. So I'm hoping that your prevention is going to be both to the potential victim and to the potential aggressor.

NORA GALLO: Of course. The issue that I see it as is as a student, I'm in lecture halls all day long with students that could be victims and could be perpetrators and it needs to not so much be directed

directly towards an aggressor or towards a victim, but needs to be able to encompass the culture. I do think that if I had you know walked onto campus my freshman year and had the education of you know, you need to have your friends' backs. You need to you know keep tabs on where your friends are. Although it should not be my responsibility, still having that education and that awareness of the way that things can really go south is important; however, I still really press on the issue that not tolerating sexual assault is incredibly important.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Right. And then my second question is, do we need to -- this is the Higher Ed Committee but do we need to expand this maybe next to year to high school level or private high school level?

NORA GALLO: I think that all high schools should have mandatory education regarding sexual assault and comprehensive sex ed that includes consent education to be made aware because you know it starts in high school. The people who don't understand the definition of consent are a big, big percentage of perpetrators because it goes down to the base of systematic issue with a lack of sex education in our country.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Just on that last point, I just wanted to point out Connecticut is also doing very well at embedding consent education into our K-12 system. There are already pretty clear standards about doing age appropriate consent education through K-12 and it's not, it's about the word consent. It's not about you know sexual assault or

anything like that. It's about making sure that our students understand what yes means and what no means and when that's appropriate. Are there any additional questions or concerns from people of the committee? Seeing none we will move on but thank you very much for your testimony. We really appreciate your sharing with us.

NORA GALLO: Thank you for the opportunity.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): As I previously called, the next student on the list is John Gabrieli. He will be followed by the first person on the general public list who is Heather Evans. Welcome to the committee.

JOHN GABRIELI: Thank you. Chair Haskell, Chair Haddad, and members of the committee, I come before you today in support of SB-19, An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses. My name is John Gabrieli and I am founder & co-chair of the Every Voice Coalition of students against sexual violence.

Five years ago, my friends and I first came together as college students because we were tired of seeing sexual violence impact us and those we cared about. At that point, we didn't have a name yet, we weren't an official organization, and we didn't have funding, but we had a sense that we wanted to change things for the next generation of students on campus. When one in five women will be sexually assaulted before graduating college, the status quo is not acceptable. We chose the name The Every Voice Coalition because we believe that every voice deserves to be heard because there's also a lot that the often-cited 1-in-5 statistic leaves out. It

leaves out that 1 in 16 men will be assaulted, yes, sexual assault happens to men too. It leaves out that the rate is even higher for non-binary students, students of color, for LGBTQ students, first-generation college students, and members of other marginalized communities. It leaves out the human cost that sexual violence imposes on students, families, and communities.

It's now been more than 40 years since researchers first published data showing the reality of campus sexual assault. It's been more than 20 years since the American Medical Association declared sexual violence a silent medical epidemic. And yet, here we are in 2020 and the cycle continues. In fact, across the United States, rates of sexual violence on college campuses have hardly decreased since 1970 despite all the progress we feel we have made. Sexual violence rates have remained unacceptably high for this long in part because we don't have the data we need to implement evidence-based policy, and because colleges remain incentivized to downplay the problem as opposed to address it. By collecting and publishing data on sexual violence, SB-19 can change the conversation and start to help identify better solutions to support survivors and reduce the prevalence of sexual violence on campus.

As the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Violence wrote when recommending a climate survey in 2014, the first step in solving a problem is to name it and know the extent of it, and a campus climate survey is the best way to do that. Since 2012, Connecticut has led the way nationally in the fight against campus sexual violence, becoming the first state in the nation to require

colleges and universities to institute sexual assault policies, and then in 2014, the first state to require campuses to institute tried and true policies or best practices in the field of sexual violence, sexual assault services and prevention.

Now, there is an opportunity for Connecticut to lead again. This legislative session, it has been an honor to work alongside the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence, the Connecticut College Democrats, Senator Haskell, and students from across the state to advocate for change. If we're going to break the cycle of sexual assault, we need to start by listening to the individuals and communities who are directly impacted by sexual violence, students, and that is exactly what SB-19 would do; offer a voice to those on campus who all too often have been denied one. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you, John, for coming here and offering your testimony. Are there members of the Committee who have questions? Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for being here. Thank you for the effort that you started five years ago. We truly appreciate that. I thank you for giving credit. You know a lot of the people up here have been involved in the legislation, you know, Representative Haddad and Senator Flexer in the past so thank you for recognizing that. The school climate, so how many schools are you aware of that on their own or have created what we're looking forward to doing here statewide in our colleges? Are there the individual schools that do that or is there other legislation out there by state that has done that?

JOHN GABRIELI: Yeah so obviously it varies campus to campus. Nationally there are about 100 schools who have implemented the AAU survey through the American Association of Universities and then many schools have implemented their own individual campus climate surveys on their own campuses and in addition to that, there have been three states so far to implement statewide campus climate surveys which would be New York, Maryland, and Louisiana.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you so much. I greatly appreciate that answer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Are there any additional questions from members of the Committee? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony. Next up is Heather Evans. She will be followed by Alex Dahlem.

HEATHER EVANS: Good afternoon. My name is Heather Evans and I'm speaking in support of House Bill No. 5014, An Act Establishing a Tax Credit for Providers of Clinical Nursing Experiences. Chairman Haddad, Chairman Haskell, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am a Registered Nurse with a Doctorate in Nursing. I work both in providing patient care and as a full-time faculty member. We understand that there is a global, national, and local shortage of primary care providers especially for underserved individuals. Our nurses and nurse practitioners work to serve in these healthcare settings. Unfortunately, we are limited in our ability to educate an increasing number of nurses needed because of the limitations in clinical practice sites which are available to our students. We struggle to find clinical placement and clinical

preceptors for our undergraduate and our graduate students.

While we can provide the highest quality classroom education, we simply cannot prepare nurses and nurse practitioners without exposing them to the clinical experiences. In fact, our nurse practitioner students must complete at least 1000 hours in the clinical setting. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, in 2018, nursing schools turned away more than 75,000 qualified applicants. The lack of clinical preceptors was one of the leading causes of the inability to accept these qualified applicants. Those qualified applicants could have helped fill the ever-expanding shortage of nurses and nurse practitioners.

As healthcare has become increasingly complex, there has been a trend to replace provider-led hospitals with business minded CEO's. Healthcare has become big business. The process of educating clinical practitioners by definition requires collaboration with clinical practice sites. Whereas this used to be a collaborative reciprocal relationship with our clinical partners, it is now a very competitive marketplace in which we are required to pay for preceptors for our students.

We have witnessed what started as a nominal has already increased to \$2000 dollars per 150 hours of clinical preceptorship. This means that we will pay more than \$13,000 dollars per student to have them in a clinical preceptorship. When schools are forced to pay this for clinical preceptors and sites, this fee is passed onto students, the students who already can barely pay for the extraordinarily high cost of higher education. The

passing of these costs onto students is not a long-term solution. Therefore, I respectfully urge this body to consider passage of House Bill No. 5014. Offering a tax credit to prospective clinical preceptors will help create a valuable incentive which may lessen the burden for our students.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for your testimony. I just want to pick up right where you left off. So the assumption here I guess is that if a tax credit is put in place and it provides a benefit to folks who take on the responsibility of being a preceptor, that that will mitigate the need for the fees to be paid for by the student or by the school --

HEATHER EVANS: Correct.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): For, uh, to entice them into becoming a preceptor. Is there any worry, and I don't know if this has happened in other states, is there any worry that that won't translate through, that the preceptor will take the credit but that it doesn't lower the cost to the student or to the institution?

HEATHER EVANS: I guess that could be a concern. That would be you know up to the institution but I can speak from our institution and the reason we have had to pass this onto students is because it needs to be funded from somewhere and we wouldn't be passing that onto students if we didn't have to pay it ourselves.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Yeah. So there are a couple of states that have enacted programs like this and I mean I will be looking forward to seeing if there is any data from them to know if this actually worked. I think that members of the committee are probably

very willing to try to promote a solution that works and this one seems like it's a promising one. I just didn't know if there is any connection or if other states have tried to connect the acceptance of the credit with a guarantee that they would pass that cost or that savings onto to the student or the institutions.

HEATHER EVANS: I'm not aware of that and [crosstalk] and those are pretty new bills.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): But you were one of the people who works at, I mean you're intimately aware of, I mean you try to get people to serve as preceptors?

HEATHER EVANS: We do and it is a really large problem. A lot of times it falls on the students to go out and outreach and try to search for preceptors which again is a burden that we don't necessarily want to put on the students. We should have those networks but when our networks are, you know, when the people are coming to our institution and requiring that we pay them \$2000 dollars for 150 hours, that's what available to us and it's a big problem. We believe that if there was a tax incentive, it's not going to affect the people who are still going to be demanding that amount of payment, but it may offer other sites. It may allow other people who otherwise wouldn't act as a preceptor to open up their sites.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Yep. Right. Thank you for your testimony. Are there other questions?
Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I'm trying to wrap my head about this a little bit. You did make a mention about halfway through your

testimony that what is driving this is kind of the change in hospitals or areas in which you know the profit margin needs to be maintained rather than you know bringing in and training people on site. Can you, when you said they, the preceptors come to you and here's the bill, so these are, these are general practitioners that are coming? Could you give me just a, just in short cause you know due to time, a little bit of, so they're coming and saying okay, we'll offer our services to you and we'll take and teach these students and bring them into our clinic and get them trained cause opposed to what, what used to happen? There used to be clinical work at the hospitals or areas in which they were getting trained?

HEATHER EVANS: Correct. Correct. We do still utilize hospitals for clinical placement, but even hospitals are now requesting or requiring money. In fact, the largest hospital that the university, I work at University of St. Joseph, the largest hospital system that we use for our preceptors now requires \$50 dollars per undergraduate student per semester so you can imagine you know that we have hundreds of undergraduate students, that's a large cost in itself. So it's usually the institution or the practice that is requiring the amount of money which for an undergraduate student, as you've heard, for this institution it's \$50 dollars. For a nurse practitioner, a graduate student, it's extremely high, up to \$2000 dollars.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Don't these hospitals and practitioners need nurses? You would think -- I've been trying to have an internship in my business but the State Labor Department doesn't allow it and

here's a place that allows it and you would think that they would want to train them and bring them into their, you know, that just seems a little. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the indulgence.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): We love rhetorical questions, Representative Ackert. [laughs] Are there any other questions by members of the committee? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony. Alex Dahlem.

ALEX DAHLEM: Hi. My name is Alex Dahlem. I'm a student at Trinity College here in Hartford and I'm here representing the Every Voice Coalition today as well and I thank you for the time. So Senator Haskell, Representative Haddad, vice chairs, ranking members, and esteemed members of the Higher Education and Employment Committee, thank you for having me today. I come before you to testify in favor of raised Senate Bill 19, An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses.

Sexual violence has been a major issue in recent years on college campuses throughout Connecticut and Trinity is no exception. Although I have never been sexually assaulted, I know many people who have, and one common theme throughout all of their stories is a lack of proper and responsive communication from college authorities. In their most vulnerable moments, moments when communication from support systems should be highest, victims are too often left alone with the memory and long-term effects of their experiences. The implementation of an Amnesty Policy would protect victims and their rights to a safe space and a smooth path to justice.

Another important part of this bill is the implementation of a campus survey to better understand the scope and magnitude of sexual violence in our college communities. At Trinity, there are numerous organizations with the purpose of promoting awareness of sexual violence. These organizations do amazing work on campus and host events and programming throughout the course of the school year. Despite these efforts to prevent sexual violence, there is no way to ensure that the entirety of the campus will be reached and heard when it comes to stopping future issues.

Furthermore, despite the few statistics that reflect the reported cases of sexual violence, there is no effective mechanism by which Trinity's administration and potential intervening forces can understand how students are truly feeling about sexual violence on campus. We need to have a campus survey that confidentially asks students about their reported or unreported experiences and uses that information to better work with campus organizations to end sexual violence. This information can also be used by campus officials to better understand the struggles that victims face, ultimately allowing them to create a safe space in which all facets and effects of sexual violence can be properly addressed.

Although this legislation is not a final solution to the overall problem of sexual violence on our college campuses, it is a necessary step in the right direction to making all students in Connecticut feel safe. I encourage all legislators to support this bill and promote its passage during the legislative session.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you very much, Alex, for your testimony. Are there members who have questions for Alex? Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your testimony, Alex. I was just sitting here. You're a senior this year so from the time you were a freshman until now, has Trinity provided any information or asked you or required you to attend any kind of programs dealing with sexual assault and what goes on at campuses?

ALEX DAHLEM: Yeah. So I, going into my first year -- so every first year coming in has to take a sexual violence training. It's an online training going in, kind of just making people aware of the possible, possibility of situations and what to do you know to help victims or if you yourself are a victim, what to do, but it was a very you know generalized training. It wasn't specific to Trinity. I'm not sure how many other colleges also provide that or if that's in state law but I know that was one thing that they did. And then also I think the general student body doesn't really have much training to go through when they're, over the course of their four years but I also played on a sports team, a varsity sports team for the past three years and all members of that community did have to go through more sexual violence prevention trainings. I think we had to do it on a biannual basis so yeah, there was a little bit, but not enough to really, in my view to kind of prevent things from happening. But also, this bill looks kind of at the other end of that too which is making sure that people who maybe sometimes wouldn't report for specific reasons can have a safe space and a

safe way to go and report and I think that's important as well in addition to more training, yeah.

REP. BETTS (78TH): That's helpful. Thank you very much. So if this were to be adopted, is it your view or the view of some of the other people that the issue, the primary issue for them not reporting, being sexually assaulted is not having amnesty or not feeling that they are in a safe place to make it? If this were adopted, would you envision the barriers such as that would incentivize or would people still have a difficult time being able to report it 'cause it's such a personal experience?

ALEX DAHLEM: Yeah, I mean look anything that we can do to help as people come forward I believe helps and it's just another step in the right direction. I don't think that it would be the end all and be all. That's not the sole issue with preventing or dis-incentivizing people from coming forward who go through these experiences but I think that it would definitely be an important, especially if we can obviously incorporate it into some other trainings and make people, allow people to understand that this is now a you know a part of state law and it's something that I know some college campuses do already have their own form of it, but it's not something that can be backed up or verified through state law and I think that this would be a great step in that direction.

REP. BETTS (78TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): So Trinity has no school climate survey?

ALEX DAHLEM: Not a school climate survey, no. I don't believe so. No.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Any additional questions? Seeing none, we'll move on. Thank you very much for your testimony. From the public list, Stephen Mendelsohn? Stephen Mendelsohn? All right. Check. From the next person on the public list then I'll go to Lily Svenson and Jennifer Dineen. It looks like you signed up as a pair. We'll see what you can do with your three minutes together. Go ahead. Thank you.

LILY SVENSON: Representative Haddad, Senator Haskell, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB-19, An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses. I'm Lily Svenson, Director of the Office of Institutional Research at Yale University. I helped run Yale's recent climate surveys. I also co-chaired the survey design team for the 2019 AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual assault and Sexual Misconduct. I'm joined today by Professor Jennifer Dineen, who directs the UConn Graduate Program and survey research. We're here together because we have a shared interest and a similar view. These remarks highlight points of Yale's written testimony on the topic of campus sexual climate surveys.

Yale supports the committee's aim to collect, analyze, and share data about the frequency and climate around sexual misconduct on our campuses.

Our data collection practices in recent years reflect these shared goals.

Starting in 2015, Yale has surveyed all students every four years in addition to gathering student feedback through other mechanisms. Following each survey, we shared detailed survey results with our community. Our experience has taught us the critical importance of using a survey instrument that matches the needs of our campus and the importance of flexibility in evolving questions over time. We believe a working group similar to the one proposed by the committee could best serve campuses by giving campus leaders the tools to make informed decisions regarding the best survey instrument to meet the needs of their own communities. Multiple survey instruments exist, each with its own strengths and no single instrument is appropriate for every school. The working group composition and charge could be refocused to identify guiding principles for instrument selection and administration using existing survey instruments as illustrative examples.

Second, we recommend an interval of at least four years between the campus sexual climate surveys. This gives time for analysis, followup studies with complementary methods, and practical change and avoids placing undue burden on sensitive student populations. In addition, the staff who implement these surveys are typically also responsible for addressing sexual misconduct on campus. A four-year interval between surveys allows a reasonable balance between the high cost of survey implementation with other demands on the time and resources of campus

personnel who are committed to affecting meaningful culture change. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And, Ms. Dineen, did you have anything you wanted to add in particular or?

JENNIFER DINEEN: No, UConn and Yale are in agreement here but I'm happy to support Lily as we answer questions.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Okay. Great. One question that I have in sort of thinking about this is, and this is probably an unfair question to ask you guys cause I think you know as far as institutions in Connecticut go, you guys have pretty well resources institutional research departments and Title IX personnel and I don't see anybody on the list later who might represent say community colleges, our community colleges where we know, you know these issues are just as important to address, but they have far fewer resources in order to implement these kinds of things. And so what should we be thinking about when it comes to under-resources colleges as we're trying to tackle these important issues?

LILY SVENSON: I think oftentimes the focus in these discussions is on the creation of survey instruments when actually there are a number of validated and rigorous instruments that exist. Oftentimes one of the most costly areas of running one of these surveys is in the analysis of the data that are collected and then further, in implementing what you learn from that analysis.

JENNIFER DINEEN: And in the administration of the instrument as well and I think that even large institutions, and there is a significant cost in terms of personnel, time, and resources that go

along with this and I was part of an effort where UConn looked into creating their instrument and had assembled a multi-stakeholder committee and an institution of our size decided that we were better off pursuing an instrument that had been developed and validated externally. There were a number of considerations. It is a large list.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): That's an interesting point. Can you just expand on it a little bit? You tried to put together your own climate research study as would be contemplated by the language in front of us?

JENNIFER DINEEN: Absolutely. [Crosstalk]

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And you put together a group of people that included --

JENNIFER DINEEN: There were a number of stakeholders at the table, experts in the field and experts in institutional research and evaluation, experts in Title IX, the Title IX coordinator. It was a significant group of varied stakeholder perspectives and we ended up pursuing an externally developed and validated instrument. Creating an instrument of this importance, it's challenging from a number of perspectives creating that something that's appropriately trauma informed from a variety of settings, creating something that has been validated and tested and I can talk about the importance of making sure that your survey is measuring what you intend it to measure, right? There are lots of consequences from coming up and developing an instrument that doesn't maybe meet what you intend to measure and so that's a long

lengthy process and it was a process that was beyond the capacity of cobbling together resources.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Last question and then I'll open it up to other folks. Imagine, I mean our college campuses in Connecticut are quite varied. Some are residential you know four-year institutions with graduate students, others are two-year non-residential colleges and so it seems obvious to me that there's some differences that have to exist between the different survey instruments to accommodate the differences in the kinds of experiences that students might have on their campuses, but are there, is there a way of sort of having our cake and eating it too of using well-established models that are designed for the particular kind of campus but is there enough similarity between those different instruments that we can discern some kind of baseline comparative information between institutions?

JENNIFER DINEEN: I think Lily can speak to the specific instruments and what your options are but I think one thing to keep in mind is that it is important to compare and create a baseline to compare institutions, but I think it's really important to compare among like institutions and those comparisons may happen with institutions outside of Connecticut. One of the things benchmarking does is it gives us metrics and information about best practices and other potential solutions too and I think it's important that those happen, those comparisons happen among like institutions so that we can learn from universities and colleges that are more like our own setting.

LILY SVENSON: I think Professor Dineen is making an excellent point about ensuring that a campus has a flexibility to select the appropriate benchmarks and make decisions about the instrument that they use based on the composition of that campus, based on where that campus is and their own development in this issues and based on the needs of the various constituents on the campus at the time and those needs might change over time. They can also change based on other factors going on in the rest of the nation as additional campuses come online offering these kinds of surveys and the surveys themselves develop and change.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for your answers. Are there other questions? Representative Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for being here and as I'm reading through your report and the survey analysis, I felt like I was doing a research project again and I think you detailed before your cycle. So your previous one was in 2015 and your latest one is 2019, right?

LILY SVENSON: Correct.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Would you be able to summarize three significant points of discovery from that survey that you could point to that were informative from your survey four years ago? Anything come up to mind in regard to the change in climate, the change in context, the change in awareness and reporting from 2015 to 2019?

LILY SVENSON: Certainly. So some of the changes that we saw that come to mind from the 2015 iterations of this survey are in the areas of awareness. We saw important and significant

improvements in overall student awareness of campus resources and that trickles down to awareness of specific campus resources around sexual misconduct. We also saw increases in students' likelihood to have reached out to one of those resources if they said on the survey that they had experienced one of the forms of sexual misconduct that were studied in the survey.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Okay. Thank you. Now as a result of that survey analysis, could you give me a couple of examples of your agency's efforts in awareness and support in putting those survey results into actual implementation and correct, and support of action? Cause that's the ultimate key, right? We have task forces all over this building. They make suggestions and sometimes they get done, sometimes they don't. Can you give me a couple of examples from 2015 to 2019, what has the university, both universities done from that survey result that you can offer to say we are actually doing something from the survey?

LILY SVENSON: Absolutely and I think, I have one of my colleagues from Yale with me in the hall today and in a moment, if I can, I'll actually ask her to speak a little bit about some of those practical changes that have been put in place, but before I do that I'd like to note that this opportunity to really not only analyze and disseminate but put into use what we learn and actually create an opportunity for change to have occurred before re-surveying is really at the heart of why I recommend an interval that's no shorter than about one every four years or once per undergraduate cohort. I have the

University Title IX coordinator with me here today.
If it's okay for?

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Through the chairs? State
your name for the record into the microphone.

STEPHANIE SPANGLER: Okay. My name is Stephanie
Spangler. I am the vice provost for House Affairs
and Academic Integrity at Yale and the University
Title IX coordinator. So I'll just follow up
briefly on some of the things that we put into place
and why we are, why we think the four-year cycle is
really actually very helpful. As a result of the
first AAU survey, we realized that we had high rates
of sexual misconduct on our campus, disturbingly
high rates, and not only that, but there was, there
was a very low rate of reporting incidents to
university offices and places where students could
get support. We made a big effort after that to
create focus groups to understand more deeply in a
way that the survey never could have told us exactly
why they were not using the resources. Some of
those reasons related to misperceptions about how
their information would be used or disseminated.
Some had to do with retaliation or worry about other
disciplinary procedures which you're also addressing
in this bill.

And so we actually instituted a campaign of
information both on our website and in individual
meetings and our reporting rates of complaints that
actually came to our office doubled from the time in
the 2015 survey to the 2019 survey, and it was also
borne out by the statistics in the 2019 survey so
that's one example. Another example was instituting
bystander intervention training. Our president put
together a task force to look at prevention

mechanisms for sexual misconduct as I think many in this room are aware cause we have many colleagues who have studied this deeply. There's not a lot out there and getting data actually helps you design prevention mechanisms and actually, there wasn't a lot out there and bystander intervention was the one program out there that had some testing and our graduate and professional students worked with us to design a bystander intervention program that was particular to their situation. They're often more subject to harassment and sexually assault often in the context of power dynamics from faculty adviser to student and actually our 2019 survey showed a notable increase in the number of active interventions students felt they could take in the low-level types of inappropriate comments and harassment that might happen in their setting. So that was another example.

And then finally, something that really was quite powerful was using the data. Each of our professional schools actually took the data about their schools and about the university as a whole and developed programs that were tailored to their own communities that actually brought home the importance of this issue and ways they could convene together to improve their climate and culture. One example is our drama school which is now known for having created a protocol to address scenes in which students might have to be actors in sexually charged or sexually violent scenes. They created a protocol that's been duplicated nationwide. Not only was that useful for those scenes, they also now have an intimacy coordinator just like they have a combat coordinator but it actually gave the community a place to start to have a conversation. Data is

important in terms of stimulating the conversation. It doesn't always help you continue the conversation to action. It can point to action and so that again, we've had so many initiatives. Each school could point to one and they have matured over the past three or four years and that's why we feel it's important to put our energies into those action activities as well as being responsible about repeatedly surveying our population.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you. I'm so glad I asked the question and that's wonderful and I want to applaud both of, all of you sitting up there and articulating some of the actions you've taken but can you give me one example that, what you've done to support the victims and going through that whole process of support, counseling, affirmation? Just share just one quick example if you could.

STEPHANIE SPANGLER: Sure.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): What are your considerations and what your protocol is to --

STEPHANIE SPANGLER: Every campus is different but the approach we take with people who've been impacted by sexual misconduct is to first focus on what they may have experienced. So we first focus on safety, not only are they safe, but do they feel safe. So we also bring in our sensitive crimes police officer in plain clothes and work on safety plans where we arrange for escorts. Are they supported and do they feel supported? We have a counseling center that's devoted explicitly to sexual harassment and assault. It's called the Share Center. It's staffed by counselors who will meet or are available 24/7 to provide counseling,

advice, advocacy. They will go with, complaint, we call them complainants to the hospital to collect evidence if they want to. They will accompany them if they want to pursue a criminal or a formal investigation of if they don't, if they don't want to, they also just continue to support them as their experience unravels which happens over a long period of time for many people, and then we provide accommodations. These experiences as we've heard already today can seriously impact someone's ability to continue with their academic aspirations and so we work very hard to create the kinds of accommodations that will allow somebody to pick up on their academic activities. Again, it may be a leave. It may be a no-ConnTac agreement. It may be a different kind of study or work arrangement and then we talk to them about what the options are for pursuing a complaint against the respondent. So we first take care of them and we do it through, we have our Share Center which doesn't do investigations or complaint processes, we have a formal complaint hearing process and then our Title IX coordinators really work on the safety support accommodation. So that's our approach with many ways that that plays out depending on the case and the people involved.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you very much and for both UConn and Yale, for you being up there. It seems like you've come a long way since 2015 based upon the survey results, based upon the commitment that your university from top to bottom had made to this effort so I want to take a moment to thank you for this effort that you've undertaken and kind of validate how important these climate surveys are to help give you feed -- you said it quite clearly,

from 2015 to 2019 the data was quite startling to you. Not to confuse your words but I think it was a compelling awareness and I hope we still have more to go but your efforts and as complimented earlier, I've very proud to be in Connecticut and with all of our universities, public and private, and hopefully with our community colleges as well, our being aware and engage in this. So I want to thank you and look forward to working with all of you but thank you for that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Are there any additional questions? I see Representative Arora.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Thank you so much for that excellent testimony, really very insightful. I think you already have a little bit of the spirit of this committee, that we really think it's an important thing to put some of these climate surveys. My questions for you are who is the right person or who, how do we get the right surveys out there? Because it looks like a group of 17 or 19 people appointed by this committee does not look like the right idea because these are extremely technical enterprise. Writing a good survey as I understand from some of the, some of my past experience is not an easy thing to be done just by taking a few questions but very scientifically testing these ideas so my question for you is, can you, if you had to suggest to us, what is the best way to write and understanding that it will be four or five or a few genres of surveys for different kind of colleges or different kind of institutions? What would you suggest is the best way we go about developing these surveys which are the most effective and are done quite efficiently? For

example, if Yale has developed a survey and is using it effectively, should we just basically have at least more of that or base it on that or maybe have the three best institutions share it with us so that we don't want to rediscover the wheel either or reinvent the wheel either, right? So my question for you is what is the best way for us to develop the survey which is effective? What is the best way for us to use data from that survey and who should use that, and finally my question is, awareness programs? What are the best way, what are the best practices on awareness programs? Because this is not something we have years to sit upon. We need to act now. If the research is already there, we don't want to sit around and say let's do research for the next decade. We want to get these awareness programs. Where is the best place to get these awareness programs because I'm thinking the mode of dissemination is going to be Facebook and online for our students? It's not going to be some, you know, come to this meeting at 9:00 a.m. It's most likely use of technology so I would really appreciate your insights into all of this for the committee.

LILY SVENSON: Thank you for those questions. I'll start with the first two questions which are kind of a pair and sort of start there. On the topic of how to select a survey, I think that's a question that I would actually encourage the committee to use as maybe the basis for how to channel the energy behind this idea of a working group or task force. There are a number of survey instruments available that are in the public domain and free for any institution to select if they'd like to, but this is a very complicated issue and surveys about sexual misconduct are very complicated to run. I think

what would be very helpful would be guidance for individual campuses about how they might sift through the information that's out there and what illustrative examples they might use to sort of pick from the available options or even create a survey by recombining some of those available options to suit the particular needs of their campus. I agree that it's a lot of information to actually organize and a multidisciplinary committee that includes individuals from survey and assessment backgrounds or institutional research backgrounds, individuals who represent the student facing aspects of campus culture, students, members of the activists and advocate committee, survivors and a number of other individuals representing different communities could come together and provide that kind of a tool kit and kind of generate some guiding principles that campuses would then be able to use.

I think another part of running these surveys, which is oftentimes daunting, is the set of sort of practical steps that go into not just selecting a survey, but then actually putting one into action, administering it as Professor Dineen was describing earlier, analyzing the results and then making use of what you learn. Throughout that whole process I think there are a number of different competing issues sometimes, sort of complicated issues and sort of multidisciplinary task force or committee could actually come together and provide kind of a road map to institutions to get through that process as well.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Is that not already out there? Do we need to really do it from track right from beginning or can we leverage is there an

organization or is there a set of organizations, some standards out there so that we can jump start it and say okay, we're gonna start from here and let's zoom -- is there -- we have, I have no understanding, perhaps other committee members do of the current state of surveying in this area? Is it very well-developed or is it still as I would say rudimentary that we have to do our work because it's hard for us? You know, how's this committee gonna get the best in class out there? You should be getting the best or meaning the professionals and experts should be doing this.

LILY SVENSON: Yeah, so we have a number of tools available to campuses, but those tools I think are best developed as survey instruments and are very limited in the guidance they would provide to a campus about how to run one of these surveys and then how to make use of the responses that you get back. So to my knowledge, there is not a robust roadmap or toolkit about what happens after you run a survey or how to prepare your campus for the fact that you're planning on running a survey.

JENNIFER DINEEN: Or which survey instrument might be right for your campus so there's not even guidance that would let someone at a smaller, less-resourced institution quickly say my institution fits this category and this category and this category so this instrument might be right for us.

REP. ARORA (151ST): But what I'm getting to is perhaps our committee should basically charge some expert body to do this rather than try to do it ourselves because our committee which we are suggesting will, it will be hard to put together some committee by folks like us who are so, doing so

many other things while having a very professional body, we should charge a professional body, maybe three of them you know so that there are three approaches to develop number one, the survey process, number two, awareness of the how to use the research and perhaps that, there should be competition. Hey listen, everybody perhaps your institutions like yourselves around the country should bid for it, should compete it and the best three will be selected as the three we recommend or suggest to all institutions to follow rather than us taking on this massive job with very little expertise going into it in something which is extremely important, extremely important for our students. Would you, would you, would you please comment on that?

LILY SVENSON: I think that's a really interesting idea. I mean, it sounds like there's a kernel of an idea for something that could be really valuable, not just in Connecticut, but more broadly. I'm not sure kind of the best way to go about producing that. I think if the end result is some kind of an easily readable sort of coherent toolkit that's put together by an interdisciplinary group including member of the advocate and survivor community, including representation from LGBTQ Plus and students of color, including members of our campuses and assessment professionals that could help each campus select an instrument or put one together if that's something that they choose to do or that they have the resources to do, but to do that in a principled way, I think that would be very valuable.

REP. ARORA (151ST): So if we asked you to have a, to do, if we had a competition and asked you to do,

to be one of the participants, would it be something that would interest a university like or a body academics like yourself to say okay, we'll offer one toolkit in this competition and so we will have several entries in it. Perhaps you know we will select, our committee which we are saying here, would just have ability to select one of those or is it going to be so difficult to have people to or institution or eligible institutions or expert institutions to participate that it won't be worth it?

LILY SVENSON: I think there's no single right way to run a survey like this.

REP. ARORA (151ST): A lot of wrong ways.

LILY SVENSON: Yes. There are a lot of factors to consider and I think providing a breakdown of what those factors are, bringing those forward to someone's mind whose maybe on a campus trying to determine the best survey or the best way of surveying their community would be a real service and I think the ultimate decision about what instruments works best for a campus is one that will be unique to that individual college or university. So that's kind of where I think getting more general guidance and trying to distill some of the wisdom that's out currently and hasn't been distilled in that way would be really useful.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Thank you. I appreciate. Thank you, Chair, for the time.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Representative Smith.

REP. B. SMITH (48TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I'd like to just jump ahead and assume that we get to

the point where there's this really robust toolkit that's available to all different types of institutions that they can tailor to fit their needs. There's a lot of competition for students in higher education and like any business entity, there's a lot of marketing that is involved around that so I'm thinking ahead to even years ago when my own kids were looking at schools, the reports about safety on campus that you were given. And so I'm wondering what kind of best practices you recommend or are in place or should be thought about to sort of reign in the over-zealous marketer that wants to put the spin in the report in such a way that the institution might really look better than it is to certain segments of the population. You know, are there any, you know, are there any best practices right now around the messaging that goes out to prospective students to sort of keep it as the informational playing field is level?

STEPHANIE SPANGLER: That's a really important and challenging question about how to use the information and it can be, certainly can be misused. I think and I won't say, I won't speak for UConn but I won't say we have the answers to that but what we've tried to do from the beginning over the past seven or eight years in our programs including with the surveys is be as transparent as possible with what we do with complaints that come to us and then also, when we've done our surveys we not only create the narrative about what, how we're interpreting the surveys, but we put all the data tables out there and allow people to come and scour the data, just the data with us. It's not identifiable data and so our approach has been to try to be transparent because one of the concerns that has been raised in

many of our communities is that we're trying to obfuscate or hide the, what's going on, on our campuses and so one approach to be very transparent, as transparent as we can while protecting the privacy of the individuals whose very real stories are involved in these complaints.

At the same time, we feel it's extremely important when you put data like this out there and it may not be advantageous to your university that you also, at the same time for the support and protection of your community as well as prospective students, be very visible with the support resources that you provide so we always couple our data with providing our support resources and making those available including allowing anybody in the world basically to call our share center if they have concerns or are troubled by our data.

REP. B. SMITH (48TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has been a very interesting dialog. I see that in your notes here you say that each student is offered the opportunity to do the survey. Does every student actually do the survey?

STEPHANIE SPANGLER: No. Yale's most recent survey had a response rate of about 45 percent.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Forty-five percent of the student body?

STEPHANIE SPANGLER: Yes, of the entire student body.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): At UConn?

JENNIFER DINEEN: It's to universal. We don't require the survey. Every student is invited to participate in the survey but we don't do, we don't enforce participation. I could ask our Title IX coordinator, Elizabeth Conklin, whose here if she recalls the response rate from the 2015 survey.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Yeah, percentage is what I'm thinking.

ELIZABETH CONKLIN: Hi. My name is Elizabeth Conklin. I'm UConn's Title IX coordinator. Our response rate in our 2015 survey was about 25 percent. With our survey methodology, with our 2015 survey, we did a sample so we had 25 percent of the random sample size that was representative of our population was utilized. There's several different ways to do it. My colleagues could speak more to this but a census allows everyone to take the survey, a sample is a sort of a statistically randomly selected amount. There's pros and cons to both approaches. There's also ways to do sort of both within one instrument which Lily can speak to, which is our intention. We intend, depending on sort of the way that this conversation evolves, our planning has been to administer the AAU survey in the fall of 2020 with a census allowing all students to take it.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): So that's your next survey? So you've only done the one?

ELIZABETH CONKLIN: Yes, and we are planning to administer it in November 2020, certainly pending the outcome of this dialogue.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Are you kind of on a five-year program or do you recommend the four to five-year time frame?

ELIZABETH CONKLIN: I think our intention is four years. We had a presidential change in the past year so that was part of the reason for waiting an additional year to allow our new president to weigh in on that but our intention is to join the AAU survey which will next be administered in 2023 so we would actually be on a five-year, now a three-year, but our ultimate intent is to do every three years with an instrument that allows us to meaningfully survey both our professional graduate students as well as our undergraduate students and to use a census that allows all students to take the survey, but then allow our institutional research experts to sort of cut the data in different ways that draws upon randomized samples.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): But both are still going to be not mandatory. They would be by the voluntary basis of a student, offered to each of them, but on a voluntary basis, correct?

ELIZABETH CONKLIN: Yes and you can incentivize which both of our campuses have done so schools, depending on the length of the survey will often incentivize which drastically increases response rates. So in our 2015 survey, we incentivized through \$5-dollar coupon to our dairy bar. I think Yale used an Amazon gift card. You can do raffles. There's a lot of research about how to increase survey participation beyond just good will so that is actually part of the cost associated at large institutions. Incentivizing can be tens of thousands of dollars.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I'm going to start waving people off a little bit. Thank you very much for your testimony. Are there any additional questions from folks who have not had a chance to ask a question yet? Seeing none, thank you very much. Just by way of information, like I really don't, I take my job seriously about managing this hearing but I just want to let members know that we have, I think when last I counted there were 30 people signed up to testify. We have heard from eight and we are in hour three. If that encourages you to ask your questions in a more concise manner [laughter] then I would encourage you to do that. I don't want to have anybody not be able to ask their questions, but just be cognizant of the clock, please. The next person who I will call from the student list is Zachary Williams. Welcome to the Higher Education Committee. You finally made it to the desk.

ZACHARY WILLIAMS: Okay. Good afternoon. Thank you all for being here. My name is Zach Williams. I'm a junior at Brandeis University and one of the Connecticut legislative directors for the Every Voice Coalition. I am here to today to testify in favor of Senate Bill 19, the bill related to sexual assault on college campuses.

Sexual assault on college campuses is a national epidemic. According to statistics published by the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, 11.2 percent of all undergraduate and graduate students have experienced rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation. Among undergraduates alone, 23.1 percent of women and 5.4

percent of men have experienced rape or sexual assault. These statistics demonstrate just how widespread the campus sexual assault epidemic is and show the necessity of taking immediate action to decrease the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses.

According to data published by the National Institute of Drug Abuse, approximately 50 percent of student sexual assaults involve alcohol. These data make glaringly obvious the need for all campuses to have an amnesty policy. Amnesty policies protect students who have used alcohol or other substances and experienced sexual violence from being punished. If, for example, someone under the age of 21 had been drinking and they were sexually assaulted, they can report their assault without fear of being punished for underage drinking. Given that the majority of campus sexual assaults involve alcohol use by either the perpetrator or the person who experienced violence, it is incredibly important that colleges put survivors first and ensure survivors that they will never be punished for reporting a sexual assault. By guaranteeing survivors that they will never be punished for reporting an assault, amnesty policies also help put an end to victim blaming. All too often, survivors of sexual assault are blamed for their own assault, based solely on the fact that they had consumed alcohol. No survivor of sexual assault is ever culpable for their assault, and this bill would explicitly enshrine this in Connecticut law.

Right now, Connecticut law does not mandate that institutions of higher education have an amnesty provision. Senate Bill 19 would change this, as it

mandates that all colleges implement an amnesty policy. The scope of the campus sexual violence epidemic and the fact that alcohol is a factor in the majority of campus sexual assaults demonstrates the necessity of an amnesty policy. I know that these bills will improve the lives of students and survivors all across Connecticut. To all of the legislators here today, you have the opportunity to demonstrate that Connecticut cares about sexual assault survivors, establish Connecticut as a leader on sexual assault provisions at the national level, and tangibly improve the lives of thousands of students and survivors all across Connecticut. I urge you to report this bill favorably out of this Committee. Thank you for your time.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you, Zach, for your testimony. Are there questions for Mr. Williams? Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Following the counsel of the Chair I will be quick but I would remiss not to say thank you because sexual assault on our campuses affects men and women and for you to be present as one of the leaders in the group reflects that this impacts everyone so I want to make sure that we acknowledge your participation and say thank you. So Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you, Senator. Are there any additional questions or comments? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony. From the general public list, Paul Angelucci.

PAUL ANGELUCCI: Good afternoon Senator Haskell, members of the Committee. I appreciate your time today. I've submitted my testimony. I won't read

it. My name is Paul Angelucci. I'm the vice-president of the Technical School Systems Teachers Union, the SVFT. I represent 1200 members.

I wanted to share a couple of concerns. I'm here today opposed to SB 17, the act requiring FAFSA for graduating high school for a number of different reasons and members have been emailing me a lot on this and one of them is -- I'm going to share my background first. I'm a graduate of the system. I grew up on the east side of Bridgeport. I graduated Bullard-Havens. I was in the trade for 25 years. I had a business in Bridgeport so I'm a product of the system, a consumer of the system. I hired kids into my business. At the age of 41, I enrolled in college cause I wanted to teach and I taught in the classroom for ten years and now I'm with the union.

The additional concerns I have are in regard to our district. The bill speaks really against our mission. You know having raised three teenage children myself and graduating hundreds of students through my plumbing shop, I can tell you the mission in the statement has to be clear. It has to be crystal clear. You know we're a trade school. We graduate licensed apprentices that go on to become licensed tradesman in this state and these are jobs that don't move to Tennessee or Kentucky. They become good taxpayers and they stay here and the additional concerns I had are marginalized students. We have six Title I school in our district and you know, we have kids in shelters. We have foster care and our mission is you know that you don't need to go to college. We're not against college obviously but there are great trades out there in the fields and there's great shortages right now in that and

you know so to tell them their parents have to fill out a FAFSA or they can't graduate or walk it just, it goes against our mission.

If this bill did go forward, I would be looking for a waiver and there are additional concerns as well like who gets to see this information? Will at one point it be for sale? You know it's like a forced census. Is immigration going to be looked at? There's a number of different things that came across our desks in our office and you know most of them, if I could sum it up [buzzer] the most we have, sorry, a student's ability to graduate should be solely based on his efforts, not his parents. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. I've just one or two quick questions, I think. One is, do you happen to know the percentage of graduates from our voc-tech schools who go on to college?

PAUL ANGELUCCI: I did not. If you looked at our offerings meaning our shops, there's 32 offerings in total. Almost of half of them are college bound shops, you know the IST, architectural drafting so that number's kind of skewed with the license trades. We have good relationships with the contractor unions and but I don't have an exact number for you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And then just I mean I just want to make sure that you, uh, that you know that Senate Bill 17 actually includes a very specific provision that people can opt out of completion of the FAFSA form by completing a simple waiver form signed by you know the guardian, parents or guardian of the student or the student, him or herself if

they're emancipated but you feel like that waiver, that opt out provision is not um --

PAUL ANGELUCCI: Yeah, but I don't think --

REP. HADDAD (54TH): That wouldn't address your concerns?

PAUL ANGELUCCI: I don't think it's enough. I have another member here today who's going to testify. She's a guidance counselor and she can tell you when she's up here that the community colleges readily come into our schools right now and help our kids fill out the forms at the drop of a hat so that's taking place. I don't think the waiver's enough. I just, I don't want to blur the message in our trade system you know and the LEA's, a lot of them have very good CTECH system components as well but you know we exist for 110 years as an alternative path and this just goes against that.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Are there, Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, sir, for your testimony today. Just a few quick questions. I wanted to bring your attention to line 38 within section 2. Representative Haddad mentioned the waiver that is available to students who are emancipated or their parents to sign off on, but there's also a provision, it begins on line 37 that a local or regional board of education may grant an exemption to any student upon such board's determination that the student is unable to satisfy the requirements of the subdivision. I wanted to get your feedback on that portion just to see if you think in the area, in the district in which you

work, that provision might provide some protection for the students who you're concerned about today.

PAUL ANGELUCCI: That would. That would definitely help but I guess my question is, it speaks to the need of the bill I guess. You know if it's so easily opted out why is it a requirement?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Sure. I can say that I think the intent behind the bill is to make sure, it is not to make everybody feel as though college is a requirement or an expectation, but it's to make anybody who wants to college recognize that there are federal, state, and institutional financial aid programs and that just brings me to my final question. Do you feel that the students who are deciding not to complete the FAFSA form who you interact with, are they fully cognizant of the federal aid that they're leaving on the table? In other words, are they making an informed choice that they're foregoing potentially thousands of dollars in aid?

PAUL ANGELUCCI: I understand that question but I believe from me, you would get a biased answer, right? Like the kids are in front of us and you know we do what we do. We put them towards trades so I couldn't speak to that but I don't know if I could give you an honest answer.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Perfectly understood. Thank you so much for your perspective today. I think you've raised some important points about the bill. I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Are there any questions from members of the committee? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

PAUL ANGELUCCI: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): The next person up from the student list is James Calabresi.

JAMES CALABRESI: Thank you, Representative Haskell, and thank you everybody. My name is James Calabresi. I'm a student at Trinity College. I am testifying in favor of Raised Senate Bill 19. Every person I know has a story about sexual assault or misconduct. Half of these experiences have happened in their time in higher education or since moving on from high school. Examples range from an ex-girlfriend of mine who was catcalled near campus, people have felt unsafe during parties or when trying to go to parties, title nine reports have been filed en-masse relating to specific fraternities and specific people. As a former RA, I would know. A friend of mine was assaulted, people have been scared for their lives, they have been deeply threatened and a burden of rebuilding their trust and faith in order to simply move through, indeed live, in their institution has been placed on their shoulders.

My story of sexual misconduct is small, minor even compared to the instances cited above, but it is still one that I wish to share today. I was in my major department's building and was walking from a meeting with a professor and started talking to a staff member. Next, another staff member, not a professor, not a maintenance person, but still a full-time employee within the department made some sort of joke and stood awkwardly close to myself. I slightly, almost unnoticed, moved away, continuing to mostly face the first woman I was talking to, but then after making another joke (I still wasn't

laughing) the second woman stepped across the distance between us and put her hand on my shoulder thinking she had made connection with me and could do so. This made me a bit uncomfortable so I flinched away and she proceeded to say don't flinch. It could have also been don't back away. I remember having to write about the experience afterwards and after some time, shared it with a friend group who were very supportive. I was pretty deeply upset. I had trusted her before then but never considered that there would be some kind of attraction to me from her, which seemed obvious after the incident. Fortunately, this person didn't do anything additional to make me feel unwelcome since, indeed she seemed to have sensed in some way that my reaction was instinctual and so ever since then has been polite, but needless to say, I won't forget the moment all that soon.

I didn't feel it necessary to report this, my RA training and self-awareness told me I could handle it, but that might not have been even an option in my mind if I were a woman, or if this happened while in my first year at college. Women, I have heard personally, often have to deal with a legion of frightening factors that come into play if one has to file a restraining order, take a semester off, or talk to the Deans' and Title IX coordinator about incidents in intimate detail. For me, looking back on all the other interactions with this woman makes me uneasy. It's an uncomfortable situation to be in for anyone to have to consider the amount a person is attracted to you by someone so clearly in a position that overlooks oneself. Again, this is often far worse for women or non-binary people. This is why I urge you, with all of who I am before

you, please, for young people everywhere, let us build a future where young men like me don't have to have their feelings overlooked, so RAINN doesn't have to report how young women under 24 experience thrice the rate of sexual violence as the general public. Let us build a future where rape culture and rape are documented and always shunned.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you very much for your testimony. Do members have questions for? Thank you very much for your testimony.

JAMES CALABRESI: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Okay. Now I'm going to start working in some folks who mistakenly signed up on the other, the wrong list so the first person on that list then would be Susan Stewart. Then we'll go back to public list which I've got here some place followed, so it will be Susan Stewart followed by Bridget Koestner.

SUSAN STEWART: I thought I signed up on the organization list?

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Yeah, you're apparently on the legislators, agency, and municipal official's list so we got to you as soon as we could.

SUSAN STEWART: Okay, yeah, great. Thanks so much for having me here today. Good afternoon, my name is Susan Stewart. I'm the Director of the State Legislative Initiative for SAVE. SAVE is a national organization working at both the federal and state level for fairness and due process on college campuses. We primarily look at the viewpoint of students who have been accused of sexual misconduct. I am testifying in opposition to SB 19.

Since the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter was issued by the Federal Department of Education, SAVE has found there has been an explosion of both complaints by identified victims and also lawsuits by accused students. For example, one University of Alabama student Shannon said, "The assault was bad, but the way my school has treated me has created more trauma than the original assault did." In the past nine years, there has also been over 550 lawsuits that have been filed against universities for their alleged mishandling of these cases. SAVE created a list of the Top 25 Worst Colleges in the Nation for Campus Due Process and shockingly, two of the universities here in Connecticut made our list. One is, and I'm going to butcher the name, Quinnipiac, sorry, I probably said that wrong, University and the other, Yale University.

In the first one, John Doe claimed that Quinnipiac opened a complaint against him on behalf of a student who herself did not want to file a complaint, destroyed evidence and subjected him to a seven-hour hearing where they banned exculpatory witnesses. In the Montague versus Yale case, Jack Montague claimed that Yale violated its own procedures, committed fraud when it tried to convince a woman to file a formal complaint, and then that administrator who talked to that woman was allowed to chair the hearing board.

In fact, what SAVE has found is that Connecticut may be the worst state in the nation for campus fairness. There are also these other cases that are very compelling. This is the Nikki Yovino case at Sacred Heart University. This is one that was very disturbing for this young man who could not get his

life back together again. This is Saif Kahn who is now suing Yale for \$110 million dollars and most recently, you of course have UConn. UConn's been in the national news for violating students' constitutional rights. In fact, Judge Michael Shea wrote, "UConn's procedures for investigating alleged misconduct and imposing discipline are so one-sided, the accused was denied an opportunity to present a meaningful defense."

So I oppose SB 19 for the following reasons: Number one, the immunity clause, I won't explain it, it's written there. It is talking to the report, if the report was made in good faith, we believe that this encourages false allegations. We would question to you what happens to, what would the institution do if they determine that the report was not made in good faith? For example, the Nikki Yovino case was not made in faith. We propose to you that you might want to address the underage drinking that's going on. I suggest you create legislation that bans alcohol on the campuses potentially in the, you know you can't control apartments and what's going on with 21-year-olds, but in the dorms. If you say that alcohol is used as a weapon by perpetrators, take away their weapon. Make it impossible for them to have alcohol on campus so that's where we're at with that.

Second part of it is just simply the council. We question why is there not one member represented of students who have been accused of sexual misconduct? Why is not one member on that council? You've got three-member representatives that come from a victim's assault group, three people. The accused

students get zero people. Why isn't one and one? Why do they need three?

And finally, the third point is this climate survey has been discussed in detail here today. We believe as much that Yale and UConn believe, they're expensive, difficult to administer, and yield unreliable results and so we just are opposed to those as well. So at any rate I'll just conclude quickly cause the buzzer went off, in opposition to it and thanks for listening to our viewpoint.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for testifying. I gather from your testimony you're from Maryland but you did a pretty good job at Quinnipiac. Quinnipiac is the name of that.

SUSAN STEWART: Can you say it one more time?

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Quinnipiac is the name of the ulceration, yeah.

SUSAN STEWART: Quinnipiac. My bad.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): One question I have just in reading your testimony and looking at it, you ask the question, what happens if the institution determines that somebody reported a sexual assault and that it was not made in good faith.

SUSAN STEWART: Can I tell you why that was worded that way?

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Yeah.

SUSAN STEWART: There, cause I do follow all 50 states as the director of the state legislative and there are other states who have a similar kind of amnesty and they actually word kind of backwards. They'll word in the way that it will say that the

student is not to be you know, how do they say it, you know subject to disciplinary actions for violation of a policy unless the institution determines that the report was not made in good faith so do you see how that's, the wording is twisted so that's, other states do it that way.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I guess it would just be my expectation that if somebody made a false allegation and it was determined that they didn't do that, that they made an allegation that was not in good faith, that there would be, that they would also violate, be found in violation of the student disciplinary code.

SUSAN STEWART: Because of [crosstalk].

REP. HADDAD (54TH): The legislation here, I mean, if somebody says in good faith, you know what, I am, I guess, I don't know. I am -- my other question I guess is you know you seem to say that you want the advisory body that was put together in the bill to have a representative of somebody who has been an accused student.

SUSAN STEWART: I'm from a national organization that supports [crosstalk].

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Can I presume that you mean falsely accused?

SUSAN STEWART: No, I just mean accused, a student that's been accused of sexual misconduct on a campus.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): You wouldn't limit it to somebody who is falsely accused?

SUSAN STEWART: I don't understand the question.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Do you think that somebody who's found guilty of violating the student code of conduct because they sexual assaulted someone on a college campus should be rewarded with a seat on the body to develop a climate survey around sexual assault?

SUSAN STEWART: Okay. I would think that if a person who has been accused of sexual misconduct, I would think that the complainant has called the police and that person is now dealing with a criminal charge and potentially sitting in jail so I hear your point but I'm just saying if you're an accused student. I mean, I just talked to you about six different cases where you've got accused students who are claiming that, you know that they've been mistreated under the system and so at some point, if you're developing a council that's going to create these climate surveys, you would want questions on that climate survey that are representative for the students that are accused. So for example, on the climate survey they could be asked the questions of do you know anybody that has been falsely accused? Do you know anybody that's been accused? What sort of resources has the school provided the person? What sort of resources are the school's website for anybody who might have been accused of misconduct to get some support? Those sorts of questions.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Yep. All right. I think we might be able to get there without adding an accused student.

SUSAN STEWART: I just question why are there members from a victim rights organization and not one, why do you need three? You can't have one? So

why not find -- there's a national organization that's called FACE, F-A-C-E, Families Advocating for Campus Equality. They are I would imagine here. They're all over the nation and so there might be somebody that's willing to sit on your task force. That has been proposed in other states, that they have a voice at the table just to say let's make sure it's all fair and equitable and at the end of the day, what we're hoping, SAVE hopes, is that when cases, if the, if the identified victims are not treated so poorly, if they're treated better and the accused students are treated in a more fair equitable way, that then you're going to have less lawsuits and more reliable outcomes when helps everybody in the end.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Yeah, I'm wholeheartedly in favor of reliable outcomes.

SUSAN STEWART: As are we.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I'm curious to know what the methodology was that you used to determine that Quinnipiac and Yale are one of the top 25 worst colleges in the nation for campus due process?

SUSAN STEWART: So we have, we, there's a database out there and I'm more than happy to send you the link if you'd like. It's kept by a professor named Casey Johnson, I can't, I don't remember where he's at but we looked at all of the school, uh, the list of the schools and predominantly we looked at students who were accused where the outcome of the lawsuit was either partially favorable or completely favorable to the student and then we took that list and we got it down by saying how egregious was the cl-, what did the school do that was so egregious to

the student and that's wording coming straight out of a lawsuit.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): It seems -- I mean I appreciate that you did the analysis of the lawsuits. Would it be safe to say that the rest of the analysis is sort of subjective?

SUSAN STEWART: It is. It's opinion. I mean we picked them and we just thought these were the ones, but they do stand out and they are also not only our opinion, it's the opinions of people like Professor Johnson and other people that follow this. It's there, we doubled checked with a lot of people and you know what do you think, is this a good enough, I mean the Montague/Yale was a nationally renowned case and the UConn is all over the news and you can't tell me -- so I'm going to read you one other thing that the judge said in the UConn. I mean it's embarrassing. Procedures for investigating alleged misconduct and imposing discipline are so one-sided that the accused was denied an opportunity to present a meaningful defense. That is embarrassing that a judge nationwide will slap down UConn for the way they're handling that case. Now that case settled, I mean it's done but, and that was written in the Hartford Current, they wrote that UConn in a compromise will give the student it suspended in a sexual misconduct case a chance to defend himself and all we're saying that's ridiculous and the more legislation that's proposed that allows that to happen, so you propose legislation, the schools take it and run with it and they do procedures, the Title IX attorneys get teed up and they start filing lawsuits. The more that circle happens, the more you're gonna have problems and we would like it to

stop as well and we don't have a solution. We're just calling it to your attention, that some of the solutions you guys are proposing are not working like biased survey panels, biased, why not, why not have a committee that has somebody on there that can give you the other viewpoint?

REP. HADDAD (54TH): One last thing, I just wanted to give you a chance to address this cause it, cause when you testify, I want to be able to have confidence in your testimony and so when you say we, I'm not sure who we are first, that's one thing, but what I, so when I, when I --

SUSAN STEWART: But we in what context?

REP. HADDAD (54TH): SAVE services. When I, when I --

SUSAN STEWART: Oh, SAVE services.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): When I throw SAVE services into you know the Google machine, one of the things that pops up is another list that was created, in this case by the Southern Poverty Law Center that lists you as one of several misogynous organizations.

SUSAN STEWART: Okay. I'm glad you brought that up because we did a little research on the Southern Poverty Law Center which created --

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I just want to know what you have to say about yourself visa vie what the Southern Poverty Law Center sort of --

SUSAN STEWART: So the Southern Poverty Law Center, just in case you're not aware, is no longer recognized as a credible organization. The FBI no longer relies on its reports and actually, they have

had a \$3.3-million-dollar settlement that they've sent to a student who they had labeled his group anti-Muslim extremist so they got in the news for that. There's numerous defamation lawsuits currently pending against it. The recent termination of the founder, Morris Dees, following charges of sexual harassment which the irony in that is insane, and the stunning revelation by former Southern Poverty Law Center staffer, Bob Marzer, of a widespread pattern of racial and gender discrimination by the center's current leadership so they can call us any name they want to call us. That is the truth of what's going on with that organization and nothing that I said here today is misogynistic. All I'm telling you is that the Connecticut universities are getting sued left, right and center. Part of the problem is you all sitting up here, that you're making bills that universities are following and then they're getting sued and if it doesn't stop, the cycle will continue and your just sending Title IX attorney to all sorts of good schools, not in Connecticut.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for your testimony. Are there any additional questions by members of the committee? Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Hi Susan. Thank you so much for being here today. I appreciate your testimony and appreciate the fact that you came a long way from Maryland. I just have a few questions. Some parts of your testimony caught me by surprise so I just want to make sure I fully understand SAVE's position here. The amnesty provision, you write that the wording encourages false allegations. Have you read the bill?

SUSAN STEWART: I have.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I want to make sure that you understand that the legislative intent behind the bill is to give students piece of mind, that they can still report traumatic experiences whether they were victims or witnesses even if they were drinking, even if they happen to be using a drug that is against campus rules. So I'm curious how giving students that peace of mind, how taking down that barrier somehow would encourage false reporting?

SUSAN STEWART: Well I would propose the question back to you, if you want to be strong on sexual assault on college campuses, why don't you propose legislation that starts to curb underage drinking? Why don't you try to say we're going to make the dorms dry?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Well first of all I'll say that generally we ask the questions during the public hearing [laughter] but I would also point to the fact that during the prohibition era it's been showing that simply removing substances from campus doesn't do the trick and yes, there is unfortunately a tragic correlation between drugs and alcohol and sexual assault on campus, but it is not a necessarily tied correlation and I don't think removing alcohol from college campuses --

SUSAN STEWART: But they often --

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Some campuses may try [crosstalk] like BYU I believe has removed or attempted to remove alcohol from campuses, but I believe still suffers from problems of sexual assault and harassment but getting back to the

question that I asked, does SAVE support any other barriers to student reporting? Are there any other things that we should put up to make it more difficult or to discourage students from coming forward or is it just the fact that we will still pursue them and punish them for drinking on campus?

SUSAN STEWART: No, and to be clear, we're not trying to say that if a student, if a girl is 18 or 19 years old and gets raped, we absolutely think she should call the police. She absolutely should be getting her perpetrator in jail so she, what, so we're not trying to say that she should get in trouble because she was drinking or that she somewhat should not report that because she was afraid because she was drinking which is a violation of the school policy. That's not at all what we're trying to say. We're just trying to say that if you want to attack the problem, then attack the problem which is the underage drinking, one of the biggest things and so that's what I just throw back to you all is create that sort of legislation around that. But you'll see that a lot of people don't want to do that.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Taking, I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, if I may go on but taking your scenario, is it possible that the 19-year-old who was raped and might have been drinking and might hesitate to come forward and tell her story or --

SUSAN STEWART: Possibly.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Due to the fact that she's worried the campus will take disciplinary action? That's why we're here today. That's the intent behind the bill. Would you concede that might be a

possibility in her thinking and her decision whether or not to report?

SUSAN STEWART: Yeah, absolutely, yeah. She might determine that but I'm just saying you might want to try wording your bill the other way and say, you know to discourage more false allegations.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay. I'm going to move onto the second portion of the bill and that's the campus climate survey which SAVE I understand is here to oppose. You're testifying against gathering more information about the extent of sexual assault and violence on campus and I understand that you cite a statistic that you call shocking. I would agree that it's shocking; 41 percent of undergraduate women reported experiencing sexual assault since enrolling at a particular university. You point to this being impossible and therefore in argument against any campus climate surveys. What if it is true? What if it is true that 41 percent of undergraduate women reported experiencing sexual assault? Are you comfortable with the fact that we're turning off the access to information because that statistic makes us uncomfortable?

SUSAN STEWART: So two points. Number one, I would say I agree with the Yale and UConn women that were up here talking about that the title or the climate surveys are expensive, difficult to administer, yield unreliable statistics and have fundamental problems. I mean that was just, we just had this conversation with the UConn and the Yale people that were up here.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Respectfully, I listened to the entirety of that testimony. They said that some

campus climate surveys are unreliable but I think that those are two institutions that are doing pretty reliable surveys that they actually use to implement policies to protect students.

SUSAN STEWART: Okay. So then the 41 percent is also again -- one thing that I find shocking is that, I forget which school it was, that said only 25 percent of their student body even participated and that's with heavy incentivizing going on, giving gift cards and things like that. So you're taking 25 percent of your student body's results and trying to do something with it which okay, fine but they're not that great. So the 41 percent of undergraduates, that's the whole point I'm trying to make. That statistic comes out of Tulane University which they did their survey back in 2017 so if that were the truth, if that were true, if 41 percent of students, women on that campus are getting assaulted, why isn't the National Guard being called? What person is sending their daughter to that school? So you've got to beg the question, and do the Clery numbers represent it? Are they reporting all those rapes to the federally mandated Clery Act? That would be like 2000 rapes. Tulane would say our Clery numbers are 2000.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Well first of all, I know that sexual assault is different than rape but I don't want to speak for other committee members, but there are certainly some of us up here who do believe that this is an epidemic that deserves far greater attention [crosstalk] and is drastically underreported but I want to move on because I know we're short on time. You're testifying against the

climate survey seems to imply that statistics can be biased and unfair; is that right?

SUSAN STEWART: It, yeah, I'm just saying that, yeah. More importantly, I think the climate survey doesn't yield the result that people would want or what they want to use it with.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Are we to forego statistics altogether though? I mean when you say that Connecticut may be the worst in the nation as you do in your testimony with regard to due process, is that based solely on anecdotes or are there any statistics that might underlie that claim?

SUSAN STEWART: No, Representative Haddad. We've talked about that. That's in SAVE's opinion, us looking at over 550 lawsuits, conferring with other people that track all of this data so we made a list. It's subjective, it's our opinion.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay. I will just end with one final question. Would you concede that any students in Connecticut face the issue of sexual assault on campus and if so, what legislation would SAVE support to help those students come forward and seek justice.

SUSAN STEWART: I do believe that there are an outrageous number of people that are getting assaulted on college campuses and so absolutely, and I am not a legislator, I don't make the bills. All we do is track the bills. We look at the nation. We look at what's going on. We zoom out and say wow, there's all sorts of problems. A lot of the victims are heavily mistreated by the universities. A lot of the accused students are suing the

universities so this is not my problem, your problem.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Right. Well thank you very much. [crosstalk] It's not a question but I do want to make the point that in your testimony, you mentioned that the campus climate survey may lead to additional false reporting. I would just call your attention to line 274 of the bill which you mentioned you read. The responses to the bill may not be used as a basis of investigation, disciplinary action, or legal proceedings so the campus climate survey, ma'am, is simply to get more information about a problem that I think you and I agree is in fact a problem. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

SUSAN STEWART: Yeah, and, okay.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Are there other questions? Representative Arora?

REP. ARORA (151ST): Thank you for being here. You know, just as you mentioned and we all agree that this is a big problem and we are, you know we really want to address it as a committee and there's quite bipartisan support around this idea, that we have to address it, the end goal. The end goal, reduce sexual assault in our campuses.

SUSAN STEWART: Absolutely.

REP. ARORA (151ST): I do appreciate your testimony because you know we have to build our strategy based on not just one side but two side information so it's effective so I do appreciate what you're bringing to the table. I want to have a constructive approach because we will, we're going

to do, we want to do something and we think it's a big problem.

SUSAN STEWART: Yeah, I agree.

REP. ARORA (151ST): You're saying you as legislators sit around. No, we want to act. We want to act properly and that's where we appreciate your role. In the current way the law is written, your constructive input is basically we should change the language around amnesty to say that unless it's a frivolous lawsuit or unless it's a frivolous complaint, they are going to be exempt so that's what your suggestion is?

SUSAN STEWART: I think I'm losing your word; I think I'm lost.

REP. ARORA (151ST): You said that, you know you said that we should change the language like other states do on the amnesty because we believe the amnesty of one and all is very important so what you're saying is changing the language on the amnesty, it's gonna help reduce some of the concerns you mentioned of complaints which may not be, which may be false and that is that we move the words around and say that unless there is amnesty, unless it is found that the complaint at the end is found to be false?

SUSAN STEWART: It's, other states have worded it that way. They worded it kind of backwards.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Which other states? Would you know?

SUSAN STEWART: Nebraska has it that way. I can, I'll send you a list if you'd like.

REP. ARORA (151ST): What about in the northeast?
Is Mass, does Mass have something like that?

SUSAN STEWART: I don't, yeah, I don't know. I'm
sorry.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Got it. So any other
constructive because we have to do some, we have to
address this issue.

SUSAN STEWART: Yeah.

REP. ARORA (151ST): I would like you to give us
constructive input so we can see the other side
rather than you know just saying hey, don't do
anything and you guys are not, you know just doing
frivolous stuff. This is not a frivolous idea.
This is an important idea. We need to do something
but we need to do something thoughtful and get it
right so [crosstalk] anything even after this
testimony, if you can send us constructive ideas to
make this better, then your role has been an
important constructive role in our process so I
appreciate that. At the same time, this is a very
big issue. We want to resolve it. We want to
reduce campus, assault on campuses. You yourself
agree that that's a big problem. Just saying that
just let's just reduce underage drinking is kind of
a little bit of a copout I will say. That should be
encouraged but please give us constructive
suggestions and we would definitely look into those
and if it's appropriate, you know, hey listen, it's
our duty to make sure that we think about them as
well.

SUSAN STEWART: Okay. So what's going to happen as
I'm sure you're very aware, the federal government
is issuing, the US Department of Education is

issuing guidelines, they're gonna, or guidelines, they're regulations are coming out so I don't know if you're aware of that or not but should be out in we think, I don't know, April, May, June maybe the latest. So these proposed regulations which will be put in the federal register and become US Code, we will mandate certain procedures that must be followed and many of those procedures are going to be supporting due process rights for both parties that are involved in the whole thing and so what SAVE has is a model bill, it's called a CEFTA, C-E-F-T-A. It's called Campus of Equitable, Fair, Transparency Act. It's a model bill, we just have wording, I can send it to you. I'm more than happy to send it to you and it sort of mirrors what the federal government is doing. We will certainly edit it once the federal regulations come down because the federal regulations are going to be shoved down the throats of the institutions and so for lawmakers, we have that sort of proposed legislation and, like I said, it's all about fair, equal, very equitable processes so that when both parties come to the table, when they walk away from it, they feel like the process was fair. So maybe this kid is still going to be found responsible, maybe he does to doesn't have a criminal charge he's facing, but he'll feel like it was a fair process and same with the victim. She's gonna say I felt like I was treated fairly. Right now that's not what they say. They don't say that. They don't say the campuses are doing a great job. I mean you heard all these people. They say the campuses are not doing a good job so that's what we're trying to say. So the federal government's trying to get a handle on it by proposing legislation that comes out, these

regulations. We have a bill, I will send it to you and it's just proposed you know language, wording and language.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Once again, I do think it's a very important thing and I thank the Chairman and the committee for taking this up, but at the same time, I appreciate the fact that we should have all points of view. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Are there any other additional questions?

SUSAN STEWART: And I'm happy to send everyone the link to our bill if you want to see it.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Do members have any additional questions? No? Okay. Thank you. I'm sorry. Representative Hall.

REP. C. HALL (59TH): Just a, just a really, probably more of a question on something Chairman Haddad raised at the very beginning. So I'm trying to wrap my head around the fact that you're requesting a seat for somebody that is not a victim but is, I get, I was going to give you a Senator [laughs], Representative Haddad's comment about maybe somebody that's been falsely accused sitting on this type of board because I think that brings a whole different perspective and to me, validates some of your concerns. I don't understand putting someone on a board that is actually accused and found guilty of any sort of sexual assault or sexual inappropriateness so for me, that's a voice that quite frankly, I don't want to hear from.

SUSAN STEWART: So are you then suggesting there are false allegations?

REP. C. HALL (59TH): Oh absolutely. I don't think anybody up here would argue that point. I would hope they wouldn't because we know there's false allegations that are made but to put somebody that actually is found guilty or is guilty of those allegations on this sort of board or commission to me makes no sense at all.

SUSAN STEWART: And that is not what I said. I don't agree with that at all. [crosstalk]

REP. C. HALL (59TH): Okay. So that's why I'm --

SUSAN STEWART: I said the accused.

REP. C. HALL (59TH): Because I think Chairman Haddad asked you that question at the very beginning and I don't think, were you clear on the answer?

SUSAN STEWART: Well if you want to use your wording which is falsely accused, I'm more than happy to use that wording and that is what all these people in these lawsuits claim happened to them and so yeah, absolutely. I hear your point. So yes, the seat at the table that I'm referring to would be for an organization, a national organization or some sort of local organization that supports students who are falsely accused --

REP. C. HALL (59TH): Okay.

SUSAN STEWART: Who are then the ones that are turning around and suing their universities because they've been falsely accused and mistreated in the whole process kind of thing.

REP. C. HALL (59TH): So that --

SUSAN STEWART: I hear your point. If the man, that's what I'm saying, if the guy's a rapist, the police should've been called, he should be in jail.

REP. C. HALL (59TH): Right.

SUSAN STEWART: So how's he sitting in the committee if he's in jail?

REP. C. HALL (59TH): So that's a good clarification. I don't think you made that clear because --

SUSAN STEWART: Oh, I'm sorry if I didn't.

REP. C. HALL (59TH): Yeah, that, it was kind of mind boggling to me so I appreciate that.

SUSAN STEWART: Yeah, sorry for the confusion.

REP. C. HALL (59TH): Thank you for coming to testify.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Any additional questions for the, for Susan. Seeing none, I guess we'll move on. Thank you very much for your testimony.

SUSAN STEWART: Thank you very much.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Next on the agenda, let's see, I've got my, Bridget Koestner.

BRIDGET KOESTNER: Good afternoon Senator Haskell, Representative Haddad and members of this committee. My name is Bridget Koestner and I am the Campus Services Coordinator for the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence. I am speaking in support of SB 19, An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses. The Alliance is the state's leading voice to end sexual violence and a coalition of community-based sexual assault crisis services centers, which

house our campus advocates. As the Campus Services Coordinator, I provide support to campus communities statewide. My role uniquely positions me to hear from a variety of individuals who address campus sexual misconduct. I am confident that this legislation would be beneficial to all campus communities.

The Alliance has worked closely with legislators in previous years to pass Public Act 14-11 and Public Act 16-106 to enhance the rights of survivors on Connecticut college and university campuses. SB-19 would be a natural next step to that legislation by creating and collecting campus climate surveys from a student's point of view. As we prepare for the new federal Title IX rules to be released, having an accurate sense of the ways students are experiencing and understanding sexual misconduct through survey results will be an important tool to provide proper advocacy to this population. These results will also inform the work that advocates and administration do every day in prevention efforts and survivor support as well as the policies and practices they implement based on the individualized needs of their community.

In addition, the Alliance supports the amnesty protections included SB-19. We support survivors and no matter what choice they make about reporting but lack of amnesty may remove their choice. Through amnesty protections, survivors will have more choice and offenders can be potentially held accountable. Substance use is incredibly common in instances of campus sexual misconduct. Most survivors do not report the assault to any campus resource, and they are even less likely to report if

alcohol is involved. A survivor's fear that they may be punished for substance use is a significant and common barrier in regards to receiving services. If this barrier can be removed for the sake of survivor wellness and safety, it should be.

If survivors don't report because of fear of sanctions, the perpetrator will be able to continue to offend in the community. A multi-campus study published in 2019 found that the problem of sexual violence is still largely one of serial perpetration and that at least 87 percent of alcohol-involved sexual assaults were committed by serial perpetrators. As we know, a great deal of campus sexual misconduct is committed by repeat perpetrators involving assaults that include substance use, it is staggering how many assaults may go unreported due to lack of amnesty for survivors.

Thank you so much for your time today and for all your ongoing collaborative efforts with our agency, campus partners, and community partners as we all address and work to end campus sexual misconduct.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for your testimony. I wanted to ask you a followup question regarding the reasons why victims of sexual assault might be reluctant to come forward. You work for an organization that I know works with a lot of victims of sexual violence. Are there common reasons why victims might not come forward?

BRIDGET KOESTNER: Absolutely. In regard to this population specifically or in regard to survivors in general?

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I mean I don't know that the answer would be very different but I guess if they are I'd say students.

BRIDGET KOESTNER: Right. You know I think definitely a significant barrier is you know as part of a rape culture, survivors are unfortunately blamed for what has happened to them and unfortunately, survivors will also blame themselves for what has happened so that self-blame may prevent them from reporting you know because they you know hold themselves accountable to some extent and are afraid of how others will perceive them. Additionally, unfortunately, if they're blamed by others or if they fear that they will be blamed by others, that may keep them from coming forward. We also know that in the majority of situations both on campuses and in the general public, these instances of sexual violence occur with people that the survivor knows and trusts so as they know and trust that person, they're likely within their family, their circle of friends and on a college campus of course, those circles of friends can become family and become particularly close. So in these instances, it's difficult to come forward against people that are within those circles, as that could be part of an activity that they're in, that could be a class that they're a part of. These are people that they see every day in these spaces and it's definitely more difficult to come forward in that instance at times just knowing that they'll have to deal with the response from their other peers or they may have to see that person in different ways. While there are accommodations that can be in place, you know sometimes survivors are unaware of what

that might look like because until that process is completed, there's no way of being sure.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I mean it sounds like, I mean it's a hard decision for many victims to make about how they're going to, who they're gonna tell and in what forum they're gonna tell people.

BRIDGET KOESTNER: Absolutely and what differs about campus sexual violence is there's more than one process that they can proceed with. Of course, they can go to local law enforcement but they can also go through the campus you know response policy and what's you know different about that of course is it's you know less formal than the criminal justice process. There's different repercussions to the offender potentially and so we want to make sure that survivors can pursue any avenue of reporting that they so choose, but unfortunately, if they don't have the amnesty, they may not come forward to their university for fear that they may have repercussions because of their own substance use or another minor policy violation. So in providing that amnesty, we would have the ability to provide them with more avenues to pursue the choices that are important for them which is critical when somebody has had their choice taken away from them by experiencing sexual violence. They may have the opportunity to regain that choice by deciding what next steps are best for them which may include pursuing you know a campus reporting process with that amnesty in place.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): All right. The reason why I asked the question is cause what I'm really trying to get at I guess is given the, what we currently know about the likelihood that a victim of a sexual

assault will ever report to either their school or much less the police, you know what we're trying to do -- the likelihood that they're going to report is actually pretty low. This bill aims to reduce that barrier by making a real victim a little bit more comfortable with coming forward by addressing some specific concerns, specifically around drug and alcohol use perhaps, but we just heard folks say that they think that this goes so far that it will encourage false allegations, that by offering amnesty, that what we'll have is perhaps a cascade or a flood of false allegations being made against otherwise innocent students and I just, I'm trying to put this in context. I wonder if you have an opinion about whether or not you think this bill goes too far and would have that kind of negative outcome.

BRIDGET KOESTNER: Of course. I appreciate the question. So false allegations for sexual violence are a rare occurrence and we know that through many different studies that have been done. There's a lot of research that shows that false reporting is rare and I do not believe that the amnesty provision would encourage false reporting by any means so much as it would provide students who experience sexual violence and are fearful about coming forward about the violence that they experienced. It would provide them with the avenue to come forward without that fear so this would be a space where survivors who did indeed experience sexual violence would be able to you know speak about that very real experience but I do not believe that the legislation would encourage any sort of false allegations which as I stated are rare.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Are there other questions from members of the Committee?
Representative Ziogas.

REP. ZIOGAS (79TH): Yeah, just by way of comment. I have some daughters and they went through college and I never had an incident like this, you know, in my life and being much older than you, I'm relatively clueless in terms of what's going on in your life in terms of the activity on campus. So having said that, when you go to your campus authorities with this complaint, are you, are you feeling like you're being treated fairly? I mean I don't know if I would be a good judge of your problem.

BRIDGET KOESTNER: Sure. So every student survivor's experience is different. I am no longer a student in the State of Connecticut and never had you know come forward so this isn't speaking to a personal experience that I had on a campus you know but students experience you know different results as they come forward to their campuses, but fortunately, because of the legislation that we've you know previously enacted in the state, there are resources that are available to students that universities are provided with and so there's kind of that solid baseline for survivors to access those resources whether they be going through a formal reporting process or if they decide to report to a confidential resource and have the ability to just achieve resources like counseling and things of that nature without even proceeding with the reporting process. So there are multiple resources that are available and like I said, because of legislation, those resources are accessible to students and I

think that based on the previous legislation, this legislation would be a next step that would be ideal based on what we've already done.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you.

BRIDGET KOESTNER: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Are there any additional questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony. Next up is Chris Bilicic, something like that. Okay.

CHRIS BILICIC: Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for your time today. My name is Chris Bilicic and I am currently a junior at Trinity College and an Intern for Senator Tony Hwang. I come before you today as not only a college student, but a male college student urging you to support Senate Bill 19 addressing sexual misconduct on college campuses. I believe when talking about any form of sexual misconduct, it is absolutely vital that male students stand with female students in saying enough is enough.

According to the Every Voice Coalition, national studies estimate that one in four college women and one in six college men will be victims of an attempted or completed rape during their years at college. One-third of women at colleges experience unwanted sexual ConnTac and more than two-thirds experience some form of sexual harassment. Moreover, studies have shown that less than 10 percent of victims actually report their assaults. Based on these stats, it is clear that a silent epidemic is occurring on all college campuses.

Although I cannot speak for all colleges, I can speak for my own in saying that the bill before you today can be a vital first step in ending this stigma around sexual misconduct on college campuses. Firstly, establishing a sexual misconduct survey would bring a much-needed sense of transparency and help colleges identify if their educational methods are driving positive change in campus climate. At Trinity, I have witnessed first-hand how a potential survey could truly reveal the extent of this problem. My freshman year, all athletes underwent a sexual misconduct seminar where we were given a clicker and gave anonymous answers to questions, such as have you ever been a victim of sexual assault on campus. I remember distinctly the results, both for male and female athletes, shocking me as I couldn't believe so many of my peers had experienced this trauma.

Further, Trinity students host an event called "Take Back the Night" where sexual assault survivors are provided a platform to speak of their experiences and be heard. For those that attend, it is shocking to see how many members of the Trinity community are touched by this. Both of these events have truly made me understand the meaning behind a silent epidemic. Students are suffering in silence and until we take this first step in diagnosing the extent of the problem on college campuses, this silent epidemic will continue.

Furthermore, Trinity has a few sexual misconduct preventative programs such as the Green Dot Initiative that trains students on how to be responsible bystanders. Such programs are necessary in ending social norms surrounding sexual

misconduct. However, there is no way to measure if programs like Green Dot Initiative are driving change. A climate survey would help colleges evaluate the effectiveness of their preventive programs and identify if new steps must be taken.

Secondly, implementing an amnesty policy to protect students who report or disclose sexual misconduct from disciplinary action can increase reporting. Oftentimes, when sexual misconduct occurs on colleges campuses, a substance is involved. It is widely recognized that students who have been using substances at the time of the assault may be hesitant to report it because they fear the consequences of their own conduct. Reports from organizations like the Office for Civil Rights have found amnesty policies can encourage sexual assault reporting. Thus, implementing such a policy can be a critical step towards breaking the silence and changing campus culture.

In closing, I hope you will all support Senate Bill 19 and join me in saying enough is enough. Let's start taking steps to ensure college campuses are a safe community and learning environment for all. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for your testimony. Are there any additional questions? Seeing none, we'll move on. Thank you very much for your testimony. You know I learned cursive when I was in grade school but I can't figure this name out so I'm just going to say Mary Alice from Sacred Heart University, it's your turn, and I apologize for the lost art of a good signature.

MARY ALICE DONIUS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. My name is Mary Alice Donius.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): You know Senator Flexer had that right and I just wasn't sure. [Laughter].

MARY ALICE DONIUS: And I'm the Dean at, I'm a nurse and the Dean at the Davis & Henley College of Nursing at Sacred Heart University and I'm speaking in support of House Bill 5014. My colleagues have presented the issues very cogently and eloquently but I would like to make a few points.

The need for RN's and advance practice nurses especially in primary care will continue unless there are women and men in practice will to precept students. Currently, the admission of qualified students in both undergraduate and graduate nursing programs preparing for RN's and APRN roles is limited by the availability of clinical placements and clinical preceptors in practice. At Sacred Heart University Davis & Henley College of Nursing, our graduate program, we use at least 90 preceptors in our FNP program each year. We would be able to admit 20-25 more qualified applicants each year if we had access to more available preceptors.

I believe the ability for preceptors to receive a tax credit for the clinical hours spent with students will incentivize nurses in professional practice to do this important work and ultimately help decrease the workforce gap and improve access to quality affordable healthcare in Connecticut. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And thank you for your testimony. I'm just going to ask one question which

is, in addition to the tax credit envisioned by this bill, are there other things that we could do to help encourage the number of preceptors to increase or to lower the barriers for nursing students to get their degree in an appropriate way?

MARY ALICE DONIUS: It's a very difficult question. I'm not sure how this group would but I know that we've tried a number of things including as Dr. Chyun mentioned paying for preceptors and then paying for access to practice so those are the two common things that we see, either paying the individual preceptor a nominal fee for their service and more and more, we're being asked to pay the practices for the availability of the practice to provide a preceptor. Those costs can go from \$500 to over \$2000 dollars and that's the only thing that's been tried. I wish I had a magic answer. It would be really helpful to all of us. I think if you can encourage ways in which it is seen as something reasonable to incur, for the practice to incur the expense despite this productivity model, that that would be helpful, that it would be seen as something that they would want to do. I think if you incentivize the practice, you might get better results.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Incentivize the practice rather than the individual preceptor.

MARY ALICE DONIUS: The individual, yeah.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Right. Okay. Are there any other questions from members of the committee?
Representative Turco.

REP. TURCO (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to ask, do all preceptors require some kind

of fee or to be paid to take on the nursing student or are some voluntarily doing it out of the goodness of their heart or do they receive a benefit from the student dean there and you know helping their practice?

MARY ALICE DONIUS: Yes. I know we at Sacred Heart, we offer a number of what we call perks to try and incentivize beyond a payment which is a clinical affiliate appointment at the appropriate level, access to the library, access to our continuing education programs, and I think those kinds of things are professional incentives for the individuals and they do help but not all practices require payment and not all preceptors request payment but what we try to do is to offer a nominal fee to all preceptors across the board. Where we run into problems is when that money is taken by the practice and not given to the individual preceptor or additional funds are requested by the practice.

REP. TURCO (27TH): I would think and correct me if I'm wrong, that a practice may like the idea of having a student do their clinical hours there as sort of a recruitment tool for nurses. I mean, they're training them at their practice the way that they maybe would want their ideal model employee to be and then sort of figuring out who they would want to hire that graduates from the university in the future. Does it not work that way? Is that not enough of an incentive to say --

MARY ALICE DONIUS: It's not enough.

REP. TURCO (27TH): It's not enough. Okay.

MARY ALICE DONIUS: It's not enough cause it does, especially at the graduate level, it doesn't offset

the productivity model. Students take more time with patients and that's the barrier at the practice level is that they're not turning the patients the way they should or the way they need to, to be profitable. There are lots of people I think who are professional encouraged to do it and want to do it but it may not be seen as something that's beneficial to the overall practice and they may be even penalized in some way for having the student with them.

REP. TURCO (27TH): Sure. Thank you for those answers and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Representative Arora.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Thank you for being here. Question, do you think \$1000 one-time incentive will do the trick? Because it appears that we really need more preceptors. The question that we always have to ask is can we as legislators really solve the problem which is an industry kind of a challenge here as you're saying and not over legislate. That's one of the risks but at the same time, if we can we should. Will \$1000 per preceptor really change the equation and make them, and I think this is one time, make them take on a student?

MARY ALICE DONIUS: I'm not sure but I think from a programmatic level of schools, it levels the playing field. I know the safe schools as Dr. Chyun said, they can't pass the fees onto the students for preceptors or for practices. We pass a nominal amount of fees onto the student and I'm not sure whether it would allow for more, significantly more

preceptors but I know from a program standpoint, it would level the playing field for all our programs.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Is there anything else you can think? Sometimes money doesn't buy everything. Is there anything else we could do or some other ideas you would have which would help?

MARY ALICE DONIUS: Perhaps my colleagues will, I wish I had something. I'm not opposed to responding to other kinds of things or working towards other kinds of legislation that would incentivize preceptors in any way. I'd be glad to do that. I wish I had the answer.

REP. ARORA (151ST): What about a certificate from a legislative body thanking them? Would that do it? [laughter] That seems like a no.

MARY ALICE DONIUS: Well certainly the certificate from the Dean doesn't do it. [laughter].

REP. ARORA (151ST): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Any additional questions? Then we'll move on. Thank you very much for your testimony.

MARY ALICE DONIUS: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And I'll start thanking every person here for their patience as this hearing continues to move forward. The next person on our list is Dr. Chaka Felder-McEntire? Is she here? Is he here? No? Then moving on, Rachel Catanese. Thank you for your patience. Dive in.

RACHEL CATANESE: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Let's go.

RACHEL CATANESE: Good afternoon. My name is Rachel Catanese and I am both a law student and a social work student at the University of Connecticut. I am a policy intern at the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund which is a statewide, nonprofit organization that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. CWEALF encourages the committee to support Senate Bill No. 19, An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses.

Senate Bill No. 19 is imperative to fortify the rights of all university and college students and employees, especially when considering the federal government's recent weakening of Title IX protections. Many students who wish to report sexual misconduct may not report their experience if it happened while the student violated a different policy of the institution. For example, many instances of violence as have been discussed earlier today, may occur while a student is drinking while underage. Such students may feel apprehension about reporting violence against them if they fear disciplinary action for their drinking.

Senate Bill No. 19's amnesty for students who report has three large benefits for students and the community of the institution. First, amnesty will open up the avenue of reporting the incident for students who would otherwise be deterred from reporting. This gives the student another option to seek accountability from a perpetrator. Second, amnesty encourages students to come forward and report sexual misconduct because it eliminates the risk of disciplinary action against themselves.

Third, amnesty sends a powerful message demonstrating that a person impacted by sexual misconduct is never at fault for the acts of a perpetrator.

The survey mandated by Senate Bill No. 19 will collect data that will allow institutions as well as the general public to evaluate the procedures and responses of the institution in relation to sexual misconduct. Transparency of this information assures the integrity of Connecticut's institutions of higher education, upholds the law, and protects students who experience sexual misconduct. Title IX alone cannot safeguard students' and employees' rights on college campuses with regards to sexual misconduct. Education Secretary DeVos may potentially weaken survivors' protections, bolster the rights of accused students, and reduce institutions liability. These changes deny students who experience sexual violence on campus equal access to their institution's education and procedures.

CWEALF encourages the committee to support Senate Bill No. 19. Lawmakers must ensure that the rights of Connecticut residents who experience sexual misconduct on college campuses are uncompromised by weakened federal protections and secure the ability of students to have their voices heard. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for your testimony. Are there any questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

RACHEL CATANESE: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Next up is Suzanne Niemic. You feel like you won the lottery? [laughter]

SUZANNE NIEMIC: Hello members of the Committee. I have my, you guys have what was written on my statement. I think you've probably heard a lot of that so I'm just gonna talk a little bit about and try to keep it a little bit briefer maybe about why I do not support this Senate Bill 17 with the FASFA. Yes, I see there are waivers but as school counselors in districts where you might have kids going to college, a lot of the time the parents already know how to take care of those things. For our district in the technical education system, our students, the majority of them are heading out and they're working. Our kids have the opportunity to go out on work-based learning their junior year in high school. They are getting out there and already gaining their apprenticeship and gaining hours so their goal is to be out there working. Many of them already have jobs lined up working within their field.

My other component that I also want to say that as a counselor at technical school, I offer a lot of things up to my students and this bill, we already have the wheel invented. I don't know why you want to reinvent it. The Connecticut Talent Assisting Cooperative Program, we have one of their counselors come into our school and she helps the students with the financial aid, filling out the FAFSA's, taking care of that. There's already people out there doing that. If you look at the mission statement for CONNTAC, one of the components of it is the mission of CONNTAC is to promote and expand equal education access and opportunity for Connecticut residents. CONNTAC advocates issues and provide support services for residents from low-income, first generation educational backgrounds to give

them reasonable realistic opportunities to succeed and be empowered socially and economically.

I believe that that's where this bill was heading and why are we reinventing the wheel? We don't need this bill. We have services that are out there. We have agencies that will help us and help our students get to where they need to go. For school districts that you want to lay this on, counselors have, I have a case load of 250 students. By you allowing this bill to come in here and say okay, this is a new job for you counselors, it's unrealistic. We have a job to help our students. There are emotional things that are happening with those kids. We have to provide them support academically, try to work with them on a daily basis. So for me as a counselor in a technical system, this bill is totally wrong. As a school counselor as a whole, the bill is totally wrong. There are services out there that we can provide our students that we use and I happen to know that they're offered at Maloney High School in Meriden as well as Platt High School and when I worked at Vinal before I transferred over to Wilcox, we had it there too. We had a wonderful woman by the name of Daisy who did all this for our kids. So this is why I do not support this bill. It does not need to be here.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much for your testimony, ma'am. We appreciate your patience. Are there any questions from committee members?
Representative Arora.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Thank you very much for your testimony. Do you think there's other things we could do instead of you know requiring for example have a, you said that there's lots being done by

other agencies, is there any other possibility, low-impact stuff that can be done or low cost because this can have a huge implementation cost to all the counselors? But nevertheless, we want to improve the FAFSA fill rate. You know, we have an objective in mind. Is there something else you can suggest, other constructive suggestions that will help us achieve the goal?

SUZANNE NIEMIC: Well I think as you're going to hear from more counselors even from within the regular public schools, we have financial aid whether it be during the night or in the day for parents who can't get there, we have, we send it out in a video so they can see how it works and for those of our kids how don't have Wi-Fi, we have the hot spots to give them that so they can get on and their parent can get on and see. So you, we have all these different resources that you can use. CONNTAC was also using, they were doing what was called a College Goal Sunday that they would be doing, they had been doing it before the Super Bowl and that's for services and they were offered at a lot of the community colleges. They were out in the communities going to different high schools, things like that where parents could come in, bring all their information and work with them doing that specific thing that you guys are asking people to do.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Can we ask disclosure or additional ideas for that every college has, every school has to send an email or some kind of more disclosure or information requirement because having you have everybody fill it is one thing, but saying now listen, please send this by mail or by email as

well as post it on your website you know throughout the year so that everybody because we need the rate to go up right and that'll be simpler to execute but we don't want to have extra cost and burden on you know administrative burden. So would you support something like that? Cause you're just sending an email out?

SUZANNE NIEMIC: We already do it.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Pardon me?

SUZANNE NIEMIC: We already do it.

REP. ARORA (151ST): No but there are others who may not be doing it so we need to also thing about everyone.

SUZANNE NIEMIC: We do that. [Crosstalk]. A lot of the school districts, they have different resources like Parent Square is one of the things where announcements go out. Where my son goes, I get a daily announcement through my email about what's going on and what they're doing so yeah, there's those things and those are very simple things to do. So if you want to have this bill come in and there are school districts that do it, you guys are going to have to come up with money to have a specific person to do this for that cause your school counselors cannot do it.

REP. ARORA (151ST): Thank you. Thank you for your time. Thank you, sir.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Arora. Yes, Representative Doucette.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for your testimony. It's invaluable to

have someone like yourself who's inside the school every day dealing with students especially in our technical high schools, is valuable. Are you familiar with the, what we're now calling the PACT program which is the debt-free community college program?

SUZANNE NIEMIC: Yes, I am.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): Okay. And you're aware that basically one of the requirements is that is, the way the program is structured that it requires [crosstalk] students to fill out a FAFSA in order to determine their eligibility. Do you think it's possible that you have students in your experience, do you think it's possible that you have students who perhaps don't realize that they would qualify for the level of aid that is available and now including this new program, do you think that it's possible that there are students who basically you know aren't understanding or appreciating the fact that perhaps there is you know a program that would provide them a debt-free you know education at one of our community colleges?

SUZANNE NIEMIC: With this new program, the word has gotten out and we've also let our students know so they're coming and seeking us out as counselors right now and so we do have that. Are there some kids who realistically are thinking they can't go and they won't approach you? Yes. For me to say no, there aren't, that would be negligent on my part. So yes but do, but we do a lot of things to get the information out there to the parents, to the students. Electronics are quite amazing nowadays. The kids are figuring out there's more to them than the social medial pages so that's always a good

thing so we're using a lot of those things in accessing the information to try to get it out there to the kids and I think that PACT is wonderful for the kids.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): And in terms of those students that go directly into the skilled trades, do you think from your observations of the just workforce available jobs, especially I'm thinking in manufacturing or in any of the trades in general, do you think it's true that an associate's in say advanced manufacturing would yield a higher paying employment opportunity for those students?

SUZANNE NIEMIC: I think it would depend on the company that they're working for. I do know some of my students, one of their goals is they, some of my seniors this year, no, I'm going out to work first because I already have this job lined up and if I work for them for a few more years, they're gonna pay for my tuition or at least for part of it so I have some smarter students thinking that way that I'm gonna work, earn some money, and then I'm going to have my employer help me pay for school so.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): Right. But some of those programs are also available to matriculated students as well, right? So you could work you know and we all know students who do that [crosstalk] who essentially go as full-time students, they're also working and you know and obviously there are other opportunities available so. No I guess I can appreciate that it's not going to be for everyone, that those programs are not necessarily going to be for everyone so I am genuinely interested to hear your testimony and others like you who are on the ground every day with these students and would

certainly welcome you know your suggestions as how to you know meet with the goal of increasing access to education and providing your students with you know an opportunity to you know ascend into higher levels of income and those job opportunities.

SUZANNE NIEMIC: And I think one of the things that is concerning right now is that we are not separate. We don't have a separate board either. The State of Connecticut, the Department of Education is our board right now. We are trying to get separate from them so as far as us just going to the board and getting a waiver, it might not be as easy as that for us but it's just also what we represent and as a counselor, I know these things that are out there and this is what we need to access, not have another bill come in and say we should be doing this and it looks like there's something for numbers, it also sounds to me like it's for numbers and it's not for the better of the kid of how we're looking at it and that's what concerns me a lot. It's for the better of the children, the students.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): What percentage of the students at your school, I don't know if you have this information or --

SUZANNE NIEMIC: About 40 percent go to college if that's what you're asking. A combination of a four-year at a community college. The majority of the kids who do end up going are going to a community college.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): Okay. And you do have people who do directly get involved with the preparation of the FAFSA or helping the student to provide that information?

SUZANNE NIEMIC: Yes and that's where the CONNTAC program is wonderful. They have somebody who comes directly into the schools and will meet with the students. The parents can call and set up appointments and meet with the person. The woman that we had, Daisy, she was great with the kids and getting this stuff together and that's her area of expertise. As counselors, that's not our area of expertise and what concerns me as part of this bill and this preparation thing is that if we're supposed to make sure this gets done and help the kids with us, that's not our area of expertise and if something gets messed up, who do you think the parents call screaming at? It's not gonna be you guys.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): And that program is out of the system office or that, the program you referenced, the ConnTac program?

SUZANNE NIEMIC: It's the Connecticut Talent Assistance Cooperative Program. If you go online you can look it up. They have counselors who come out. They're based in our community colleges and if you look in, when you go onto their web page, if you look onto their web page, I read you part of their mission statement but also they look at the service area and where are the service areas. Housatonic Community College, Quinebaug Valley Community College, Tunxis Community College, Capital Community College in Hartford, in Manchester. They are not part of the community college system. They are separate but they're housed in our community colleges and they provide these exact services you guys want to see happen so it just makes more sense not to reinvent the wheel.

REP. DOUCETTE (13TH): That's helpful and I appreciate that and like I said, any experience that you're able to offer us as a practical matter is valuable to our discussion of this. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Representative Doucette. Yes, Representative? I would just remind you to use your microphone.

REP. ZIOGAS (79TH): I'm sorry. Yeah, this reminds me, this conversation reminds me of some of the requirements we've imposed on our local boards of education in terms of course requirements and adding on to their agendas with what our kids need, and this is added responsibility onto that board of ed and I can almost hear my board of ed people screaming now about another unfunded mandate and how are we going to pay for all the additional costs associated with this labor that needs to be addressed. So I think we need to be careful about the things that we think are good ideas here and how we translate them back into our local communities. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Representative. Did you want to respond to the representative's comments?

SUZANNE NIEMIC: No.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): No. Were there any other thoughts, questions or comments from committee members? Seeing none, thank you very much, ma'am, for your testimony. Thank you for your work with Connecticut students as well. Next on the list we have Hamash McConnell. I'm so sorry. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your patience this afternoon.

HAMASH MACPHIL: Thank you. My name is Hamash MacPhil and I am the policy and research director for ConnCAN. We're a statewide nonprofit that works to ensure that all children in Connecticut, regardless of background, have access to a world-class education. For more perspective, I am also a former kindergarten teacher so I try to practice patience every day and I am former high school soccer and basketball coach so I've worked with students who are going through that college admission process.

I am here today to testify in support of SB 17, An Act Requiring the Completion FAFSA. For many Connecticut students, the path to college is unclear, uncertain and can feel out-of-reach. As a state, we've made important changes to help reduce the barriers to apply for and gain acceptance to college, including replacing high school testing with the SAT so that every junior can log a nationally understood and recognized score, at no cost and commitments to reduce, and in some cases eliminate, student loan debt at our public community colleges.

By requiring students to complete the FAFSA in order to graduate, Connecticut is simplifying and demystifying the college application process for families. This is a strong step to improve college acceptance, affordability and matriculation for Connecticut students. I do, however, have questions regarding the bill's equity and Connecticut's role in tracking student outcomes beyond high school.

Concerning the bill's equity, right now, the majority of Connecticut students are below grade-level in math. Likewise, the Education Committee

has made financial literacy education a priority for this session because many students lack the basic financial skills they need for adulthood. As a state, frankly, we're underperforming in math. This applies to the students of today and the students of yesterday, i.e. adults and parents that will help the students fill out the FAFSA.

ConnCAN's concern with SB-17, as written, is that it does not provide adequate support for families to learn how to complete the FAFSA accurately. How will Connecticut schools ensure that the forms are completed properly with a full picture of the family's finances, given the complexity of the American tax code and the sensitivity families have when discussing finances. This bill should ensure that families who require support in completing the FAFSA receive it, otherwise the process will not yield results in college acceptance, matriculation and completion.

Additionally, including adult educational opportunities is an innovative way to engage with families, especially those from historically disenfranchised communities. On tracking student outcomes, in states where similar legislation has passed, FAFSA completion has increased substantially. For example, in Louisiana it went from 26 percent to 79 percent completion over two years. SB-17 requires that SDE reports FAFSA completion rates to track progress. This is necessary for understanding the legislation's effectiveness, but is insufficient in isolation.

The more important issue is whether students gain acceptance, matriculate and complete college. SB-17 has the opportunity to draw that in, to track what

happens after high school students graduate and can report on college completion rates five years down the road. Why include college completion rates? If this legislation opens the door for college, for students to attend college, pardon me, but fails to show that students are completing college, it could inadvertently amplify the student debt crisis.

In conclusion, this is an exciting step for Connecticut students and will surely open doors to college for many. With a few minor adjustments, the bill will deepen its impact and encourage data-driven decision-making down the road. Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much for your testimony today. I really appreciate it. Are there questions or comments from committee members? Seeing none, thank you, sir. Next is I believe that says Robin Sparks from End Hunger CT. Great. Thank you. After that will be Tracy Chidsey from the Yale School of Nursing.

ROBIN LAMOTT SPARKS: High everyone, good afternoon, good evening I guess at this point. My name is Robin Lamott Sparks and I'm the Executive Director of End Hunger Connecticut. We're the only statewide organization dedicated to improving food security for families throughout.

Connecticut is a leader in the country regarding feeding our children at school. Our work expanding free meals to all children in school and feeding children in the summer has been recognized nationally. Just today, the Food Research and Action Center recognized Connecticut because we led the country in increasing the percentage of students with free and reduced price to eat breakfast at

school. We actually were over 10 percent increase in a year from 2017-18 to 2019.

Yet, once children graduate high school and begin college, that same support seems to end. According to the Real College survey that was just done at Temple University's Hope Center for College, Community and Justice, nearly 40 percent of college students face food insecurity and here in Connecticut, our colleges are recognizing food insecurity issues among their own students. Most of our community colleges as well as Central Connecticut State University have food pantries on campus for their students. In fact, according to national data, the percentage of all undergraduates who had a household income at or below 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Line increased from 28 percent in 1996 to 39 percent in 2016.

Hence, we laud the committee to drawing attention to this very real problem. While we support the current bill's goals together with the Greater Hartford Legal Aid, we would suggest some alternative language to expand student eligibility further and Lucy Potter is here as well so if we get into questions about that, I will ask that we bring her up here too cause she's the lawyer and I am not. The current bill links college programs to the SNAP Employment and Training program, which is designed for those individuals who are already receiving SNAP. Alternatively, we would like to see Connecticut expand SNAP eligibility to more low-income college students by increasing the number of employment and training programs which exempt students from SNAP's 20-hour work requirement.

Federal law allows states to exempt students from this requirement if they are enrolled in a program for the purpose of employment or training. These programs have to be operated by a state or local government, target low-income households, and increase participants' employability. Many other states including Massachusetts have expanded SNAP eligibility for college students using this provision. And some states, like Oregon, have not only deemed many community college programs exempt, but some four-year programs as well. Hence, Oregon students who want to be teachers are exempt from the work requirement if they are enrolled in a teacher education program.

We support expanding SNAP eligibility to low-income college students because anything we can do to help our low-income students achieve a degree which leads to a sustainable living wage is a goal upon we can all agree and like my own daughter, who's a freshman in college right now, sometimes students need a little extra support to achieve their goals. This bill would give many students the assistance they need to successfully graduate and move into our work force. Consequently, we support the alternative language attached to my testimony which you have to help support our students. Thank you.

With the new language, we know that even more hardworking students will be able to achieve their goals of furthering their education and employment opportunities, while also receiving food assistance during their time as a student. No one can learn if they are hungry, no matter their age. Hence, we applaud the Committee for looking at ways to

increase eligibility and accessibility of SNAP benefits for college students. Thank you

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you very much for your that makes sense and I would just start by saying that when we met earlier this year, this bill idea sort of bill idea first came up I have had and members of this committee have had a longstanding interest in seeing what we can do to help alleviate food insecurity on campuses and this seemed like a great idea. It is a good idea. The draft that came out was I think a good faith effort to delivery on the conversation that we had in terms of a bill and I thank you for the drafting suggestions that you made cause I think that brings us much more to the intent of the legislation and towards a solution that potentially could really help a number of students on our campuses. I just want to be very clear about something. So SNAP is, the eligibility, determining the eligibility for a student is a responsibility of the Department of Social Services and sort of outsource that to a number of different non-profit organizations? They do it themselves?

ROBIN LAMOTT SPARKS: They do it themselves. They are the only ones who can determine whether a student is eligible.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Okay. So there a number of non-profit organizations that can help you [crosstalk] complete your SNAP application.

ROBIN LAMOTT SPARKS: Right.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Then it goes to DSF. DSF makes a determination based against federal guidelines.

ROBIN LAMOTT SPARKS: Based on federal guidelines, yes.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And then if they are eligible, then those benefits actually come, would go to that person from the federal government. Right?

ROBIN LAMOTT SPARKS: Correct. Well through the state. It's comes [crosstalk].

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Through the state. Is there an allocation? I'm trying to determine if there's, is there a budget for SNAP benefits for the State of Connecticut or is it an open-ended --

LUCY POTTER: It's not, it's not [crosstalk].

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Dollar amount that comes from the federal government.

LUCY POTTER: Yeah.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): If you want to identify yourself?

LUCY POTTER: Oh, I'm Lucy Potter [crosstalk].

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I'll let you answer that question, but you have to identify yourself.

LUCY POTTER: I'm from Legal Aid and Robin and I have been working together and we also met with you earlier and helped [crosstalk].

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I'm sorry and your name is?

LUCY POTTER: Lucy Potter.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Got it.

LUCY POTTER: Greater Hartford Legal Aid.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And so the question is, are there, there are no state dollars in the program, they're all federal dollars and based on the number of people we determine are eligible, there's a growing number of federal dollars that are available for this program?

LUCY POTTER: That's right. We'll enhance the number of federal dollars coming into Connecticut which is important cause there's many other ways in which federal, the food stamp rules are being cut back and limiting the dollars which actually we heard cuts of up to \$98 million dollars for Connecticut, not coming to Connecticut because of other rule changes. And I think an important point too is that we're not talking about conferring eligibility on college students. What it is, is that the SNAP rules as they exist make college students ineligible based on the idea that these are a bunch of rich kids who are just exploiting the program but as Robin pointed out, the demographics of who's attending college and especially community colleges are now very different from that and really only 30 percent of the students attending college fit that demographic and there are many more who really could use this help.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Right and specifically, as I understand it, the legislation says that there are specific programs offered at community colleges and four-year institutions that would satisfy the 20-hour work requirement or exempt you from the 20-hour work requirement.

LUCY POTTER: That's correct.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): If you're enrolled in them and so this bill says let's get those colleges and universities to do an assessment of their programs to determine which of their programs are eligible for that exemption and right and that I think would help make many other otherwise ineligible college students eligible for the federal benefit, correct?

LUCY POTTER: That's right.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Okay. Good.

ROBIN LAMOTT SPARKS: And the state would have to be, it's not just universities deciding on their own. I mean a state has the right to say here are the programs that are exempt so it's really moving it forward that way.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Right they do an assessment but we have to certify that's the case, right? Are there any additional questions from members of the committee? Thank you very much for your testimony. Thank you for hanging in there. You're the one and only folks that testified.

LUCY POTTER: There's two of us.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Two of you that testified and I appreciate it.

LUCY POTTER: I've submitted testimony. For some reason my sign-up didn't work but I would be the last one on the list but you're not even going to see my name but I'll go with what I've submitted already, okay?

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Moving on then, Tracy Chidsey. Welcome to the committee.

TRACY CHIDSEY: Thank you. Senator Haskell, Representative Haddad, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 5014. I am Tracy Chidsey, Associate Director of the Yale Nursing School Clinical Support Unit, and I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB 5014. This bill will support crucially needed workforce development by establishing tax credits for professionals who serve as clinical preceptors to nursing students throughout the state.

Preceptors are vital to the education of nurses, including our nurse practitioner and nurse midwifery students and at the Yale School of Nursing. Preceptors are licensed and practicing healthcare professionals, such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants, or physicians, who serve as voluntary faculty in the education and mentorship of nursing students in a patient care setting. The next generation of nurses and nurse practitioners cannot be produced without clinical precepting hours and experiences. Finding an adequate number of preceptors is a continuing challenge for all nursing schools in Connecticut, and indeed the nation.

Most preceptors receive no compensation for their participation in teaching, despite the fact that taking time to mentor students inevitably reduces the number of billable patients a preceptor may treat. The Yale School of Nursing must find over 700 preceptor placements each year for its 240 midwifery and nurse practitioner students. It is a continuing struggle to recruit an adequate number of preceptors; healthcare providers are eager to pay it forward for the next generation but they find it increasingly difficult to do in a healthcare system

demanding greater and greater efficiency in healthcare delivery.

Considering the shortage of nurses in Connecticut, it behooves the state to do all that it can to encourage ample clinical training opportunities for nursing students, especially since a large number of nursing students choose to stay in Connecticut.

A tax credit represents a fair way to offset the preceptor's loss of efficiency in treating patients. A tax credit also reflects our shared interest of all Connecticut residents in addressing the shortage of nurses in the state. A relatively small but powerful state investment in the healthcare professions academic pipeline through preceptor tax-credits will improve Connecticut nurses' ability to develop and grow future healthcare professionals in this state, close the gap on the shortage of health care professionals, and increase economic revenues statewide.

The Committee's support of HEPATITIS B 5014. and consideration of the proposed amendment is greatly appreciated. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for your testimony and thank you for the suggestion for a language change. You know I think that we have the bones of a really good bill in front of us but we'll be looking at this suggestion and others made by some of your colleagues to sort of see if we can come up with a solution that really works for Connecticut. Are there any other questions by members of the committee? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony and for your patience today.

TRACY CHIDSEY: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Next person on the list is Pamela Forte. Okay.

PAMELA FORTE: Well thank you very much for taking my testimony today. Members of the committee, Chairperson of the committee, my name is Pamela Forte and I am the Director of Clinical Education at Southern Connecticut State University, Department of Nursing. I'm submitting this testimony today in support of House Bill 5014, and it is in representation of my department.

In my role as Director of Clinical Education in the Nursing Department at SCSU, I'm responsible for oversight of clinical placements for our undergraduate and graduate students. Our clinical practice sites are committed to their contributions to the education of nursing students yet are often overwhelmed by the need to also maintain safe, high quality healthcare delivery. When clinical practice sites and their healthcare providers volunteer to precept nursing students, they are taking on additional responsibility to not only maintain safe high quality patient care, but to also share their knowledge with the next generation of nurses. At the graduate level, many preceptors or their institutions need to charge universities a preceptor fee per student to offset the additional time to properly precept an FNP student.

SCSU currently spends approximately \$20,000 dollars per year for FNP preceptors, a fee that is not passed onto the student and therefore significantly impacts an already limited budget, especially at a state university. Providing a tax credit to the

providers or their institutions can have some very positive effects. It can encourage providers to precept nursing students. This could enable more students to enter nursing programs at a time when the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics projects more than 500,000 experienced RN's will retire by 2022, leaving a gap of 1.1 million new nurses.

The tax credit's positive effects for healthcare institutions could possibly be in providing additional funds needed to increase staffing during times of precepting, thereby allowing preceptors to have safer decreased patient assignments while they educating their students. Providing nursing students with meaningful, direct care clinical experiences guided by preceptors who are experts in clinical practice is vitally important. With some studies reporting approximately 400,000 deaths occurring in the United States each year as a result of medical errors or preventable harm, there is no greater need in the education of new nurses than to graduate nurses who are receiving a strong foundation of theoretical knowledge and equally rigorous clinical practice experiences.

I urge you to support House Bill 5014. This bill will support an increase in critically needed preceptors, potentially decrease growing costs at schools of nursing, and most importantly, assure the people of our state that the nurses who are caring for them at some of the most vulnerable times in their lives are well-prepared and ready to meet their critical healthcare needs. Thank you for your consideration.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for your testimony and I know you've been sitting there in the front row there all afternoon --

PAMELA FORTE: For a long time.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): So thank you for your patience. One quick question. When you say that Southern spends approximately \$20,000 dollars per year for FNP preceptors, family --

PAMELA FORTE: Nurse practitioners.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Nurse practitioners, does that, is that inclusive of all of the nurses who would also be, I'm unfamiliar with the term, I don't know if it's inclusive or it's a narrow set of nurses that are working to get a nursing degree at Central.

PAMELA FORTE: At Southern?

REP. HADDAD (54TH): At Southern.

PAMELA FORTE: That's just one portion of our program so those are the APRN students, the nurse practitioner students and those are the ones that currently we pay the largest fees for. We pay, and as my colleagues who have been here today were speaking to, we can pay anywhere from \$250 dollars to \$2000 dollars for one semester for one student and so this cost is just skyrocketing for the students and we can't pass that fee along and so it's now a burden upon the university and as some of my colleagues spoke to, even on the baccalaureate level, now we're beginning to see that hospitals are charging for student placements and the point that I wanted to make that I think is a little different from what some of my colleagues have brought up already is that it's not just the placement. So

it's not just putting a student in a placement and you can say check the box, I put this student in a placement, they're all set. It's the quality of that learning and that's what really concerns me. I've been doing this for a long time. I've been in nursing education for over 25 years and most of my time is spent based clinically on education of students and what I see happening is that as healthcare institutions are becoming busier places, more acuity level, less staffing, more need for revenue, those are all problems that have been occurring over the last number of years, what's happening is that the student experiences are getting some diluted and that concerns me because having been a clinical educator on the front lines, I know the difference between a student going to a clinical site and strictly observing care. And a student giving hands-on direct care guided by an expert in the field and what you're going to end up graduating and what we're gonna see are these people coming out into practice who are not well prepared. And so two things happen. Either we have this revolving door where they graduate and they realize 12-18 months out or two years out that you know I'm not ready for this or this is more than I bargained for and they leave the profession, or we have people who take so long to get up to a competent level of care that they're really you know putting a burden on the system and my bigger concern is just safety, safety and quality of healthcare for the state and the nation in general. But these are the kind of trends that have been happening over a number of years and I just see it escalating at this point.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you very much for your testimony. Are there any other questions by members of the committee? Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I also want to acknowledge as the Chair did and you sitting up in front and patiently hearing all the feedback from other people, I just want to thank you for coming and offering your statements so it's appreciated. Thank you.

PAMELA FORTE: Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Thank you very much for your testimony.

PAMELA FORTE: Okay. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): The next name on the list is Michelle Catucci. Close. Is Virginia DeLong your colleague?

MICHELLE CATUCCI: Yes.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Do you want to come together? It's up to you. Go ahead.

MICHELLE CATUCCI: Respected members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, my name is Michelle Catucci and I am a school counselor and Treasure High School and the Executive Director for the CT School Counselor Association. I am grateful for the opportunity to share my feelings in regards to SB No. 17 regarding the FAFSA. I provide information on the FAFSA to our families and have collaborated with the State Department of Education

to provide a webinar to school counselors in the state this year to help increase that FAFSA completion rates in schools. However, I'm not a certified financial planner and I do not feel comfortable or qualified to offer direct support in filling out the FAFSA to my students and families.

On a daily basis, I work closely with students and families to identify their school and career goals, explore the options that exist to help them reach their goals, and then provide them with resources that can assist in their planning and goal attainment. In my work I have learned that each of my students is unique and there is no predetermined or prescribed path that leads a student to personal fulfillment and individual success. I have been delighted to see that in the last few years, there has been an increased emphasis on workforce development and preparing Connecticut students to fill jobs in our state that are in need of good, quality workers through a variety of post-high school training and education opportunities. I feel like we are at a turning point in education where students across all socioeconomic groups are beginning to feel more empowered to pursue what they are passionate about rather than what they are supposed to do after high school. This shift makes me excited about the possibilities to come for all of our students and the workforce in Connecticut.

It is because of this shift I have witnessed that I was disheartened to see the proposed legislation to make the FAFSA a graduation requirement. I fully support and believe that any student who wants to pursue a college education should have that opportunity and that we need to improve equity and

access for all populations to be able to attend college financially; however, I am opposed to requiring all students to complete a FAFSA as part of their graduation requirements for several reasons which I have outlined in my written testimony and my colleague will be talking more about that echos a lot of the sentiments of our members that we polled.

In my written testimony, I also shared some ideas that would continue to support more equity and access in the college funding process for all students while also potentially increasing the number of families who are completing the FAFSA without making it a requirement. My suggestions include more consistent opportunities to educate students and assist families in applying for financial aid, offering support for schools in making coursework in financial literacy or personal finance available to their students, and increasing collaboration between schools and the CT community colleges to have more students taking advantage of the College and Career Pathways (CCP) Program and the PACT program. By educating our students and helping them understand the importance of the FAFSA, what taking on loan debt means, and how to make a successful financial plan for their future, we are preparing them for the real world, not just having them complete a FAFSA application to fulfill a graduation requirement. Thank you for your time and consideration.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for your testimony and we will ask the members if they have any questions? If not then we'll invite your colleague and we'll hear her testimony as well.

MICHELLE CATUCCI: Thank you very much.

VIRGINIA DELONG: Good evening, everyone. My name is Virginia DeLong and I am a school counselor and I am Chairman of the Government Relations and Advocacy Committee for the Connecticut School Counselor Association and as you know, I'm here to talk about the legislation that is being proposed, An Act Requiring Completion of the FAFSA form.

The Connecticut School Counselor Association is a professional organization that represents over 1400 school counselors in the state. As an association, after polling our members, we found that several benefits were found in this FAFSA completion, but we have several concerns about this legislation. The legislation would most certainly provide students who may not typically fill out the FAFSA the opportunity to do so and it would allow more students access to federal money to attend college or other post-secondary programs. We know that there are already disparities among low-income and minority students and that disparity is even greater when they do not have access to the knowledge and information in regards to financial aid and post-secondary options. This requirement would help to create access for students and families to help with equity among our students, as it would no longer single out a specific type of student for college. However, many of our members do not feel that requiring the FAFSA completion for graduation is necessarily the best route to bridge these gaps.

There are many concerns with our members that this bill does not specify who would be responsible for making sure this mandate is carried out in our schools, and we feel that it would most likely fall on the shoulders of the school counselors.

Caseloads are already very high with the average student to counselor ratio being 466:1 in Connecticut. If this bill were to pass, the state legislature would really need to consider the need for more school counselors and how we can put more school counselors in all of our schools. There is also a concern that school counselors are not trained financial planners. Financial advice should come from a licensed financial expert, not school personnel. The FAFSA requires very personal financial information that some families are not willing to disclose. Filling out the FAFSA should be a family choice, not a mandate.

There is also the concern about what message this mandate would send to students. By requiring every student to fill out a FAFSA which is intended for higher education purposes, the message that may be sent to students is that college is the path they should be taking after high school. As school counselors, we are specifically trained to work with students on their post-secondary plans, which vary depending on the student and their future career goals. There is not a one size fits all approach to working with our students, and school counselors are trained to take a variety of approaches in order to help meet the needs of each individual student.

The Connecticut School Counselor Association has major concerns with this bill, as it does not address those individual needs of students, especially those who have chosen to enlist in the military or who have chosen a career path that does not require post-secondary education. The legislation as a graduation requirement has nothing to do with student achievement and is contingent on

parent's behavior, not student performance. While it is understood that a waiver will be available, will school districts be looked upon unfavorably because they have a high number of waivers being filled out? The last thing we want penalize districts in any way because students and families are choosing not to fill out this form.

We are happy to discuss any other options or suggestions on how we can have higher rates of FAFSA completion and we look forward to those discussions as an association with all of you. Thank you for the time to testify today.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you very much for your testimony. Is there any member who has a question? Seeing none, thank you very much, I'm sorry, Senator Flexer.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH): I'm sorry, just a quick question. The organization you represent, can you tell us a little bit more about it?

VIRGINIA DELONG: Yes. We are the only professional organization in the state for school counselors. We represent about 1400 school counselors. We are affiliated with the American School Counselor Association which is our national association. We represent school counselors at all levels, elementary, middle, high school, higher education with our counselor educators as well as all of the technical schools within the state.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH): And what's the definition of a school counselor?

VIRGINIA DELONG: So we were formerly called school guidance counselors which is really an antiquated

term so our role has changed quite a bit over the last 20 years so you know a lot of times, probably most of you had a guidance counselor. I had a guidance counselor who really worked on college and career preparation, but now our role has really expanded. We still do the college and career you know aspect of things, but we're also working with students on social and emotional issues, academic issues, so our role has really expanded so the name change came about 20 years ago where we were changed to school counselors because we weren't just guiding students in their post-secondary paths.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH): Okay. But you don't engage in therapeutic or behavioral?

VIRGINIA DELONG: We do short-term counseling, 6-8 weeks is kind of our max in terms of counseling and then if more therapeutic counseling as needed, then we refer out to outside agencies and counselors.

SENATOR FLEXER (29TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Are there any additional questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

VIRGINIA DELONG: Thank you very much for your time.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Liz Getts. Thank you for hanging in there today.

ELIZABETH GETTS: No, thank you all so much for hearing me out. I realize I'm the last person so I really appreciate everyone staying to hear me speak so for the recording, my name is Elizabeth Getts. I am a student. I take classes at Housatonic but have a program at Southern State University, and I'm also

Senator Hwang's intern along with Chris, who spoke earlier.

So hi, thank you again so much for hearing me out. I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 19. This bill focuses on two major components, the climate survey and the amnesty proposal and we've heard a ton of testimony on those two aspects today so I'm just going to shift the focus away from those, important as they are, and talk about the language of this bill that states specifically about intimate partner violence.

My generation is subject to the stereotype that abuse, whether it be sexual in nature or not, is uncommon or not really possible in relationships between a boyfriend and a girlfriend and let me be perfectly clear in saying that that is absolutely untrue. As a woman who has gone through a five-year-long relationship where I was subject to abuse that satisfies five different types of abuse, physical, sexual, verbal, mental, and financial, despite the testimony of previous speakers, neither of us were intoxicated or on any type of drugs, I know that this bill will help students feel comfortable and safe in reporting all types of violence on campus, and in an ideal world, eventually the climate surveys will not be needed.

Starting at 15 years old and going through when I turned 20, I became a victim ignored by campus counselors, friends, family, and police officers both on campus and off. As a result, similar to a previous speaker, I became distant from my social circle, I turned into a poor student, and left the university where I had been publicly assaulted and humiliated, and began expressing my pain and anger

in the unhealthiest ways. I speak to you now stronger, more passionate, and a vocal advocate for women and activist for victims of domestic violence when I implore you to please pass this bill. This bill will ensure that we create a brighter and healthier future for campus communities in this state. Thank you so much.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you very much for your testimony. Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you. I just want to thank you for offering your strong words and your good work as an intern and you know I'm first hearing of this and so thank you for your courage in being able to share your story so others can feel comfort and confidence to be able to share theirs and be stronger for it. Thank you.

ELIZABETH GETTS: Thank you for listening.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you. Any additional questions? At this point we've called all of the names on the public list and unless there's somebody else who wants to address the committee, oh, Mr. Mendelsohn. Go ahead.

STEPHEN MENDELSON: Yes, my name is Stephen Mendelsohn and I'm here to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 19. You have copies of my written testimony. I know it's not, apparently it was not yet posted online. I did send it in. My opposition to the bill comes from my experience as survivor of sexual assault and I explain in my testimony what my first-grade teacher as well as what my sixth-grade gym teacher did to me and it was quite humiliating

and you would think that as a survivor, I would support all of these efforts and yet, I think what's really important is, but yet, I think it's very important to defend the fundamental constitutional principles of due process, the presumption of innocence, the right to cross examine and to be careful in this area.

I think I would cite the judge in the Nikki Yovino case, the woman who was convicted of filing a false report against two black male students whose lives were ruined when Sacred Heart chose to believe the accuser in this case rather than try to get and find out the truth and what she said is false allegations harm all true survivors and I think it's, we really have to be careful here when we use the language survivors or accusers. Again, as I said, there's a presumption of innocence here and before we dig to the truth, we have to make sure.

Now in terms of the bill, I have a problem with the whole idea of granting blanket immunity on mere "good faith." We were talking before you know how does this incentive potentially have an unintended consequence and I understand the good intentions here, but it also has the unintended consequence of incentivizing people to file an allegation when they might be accused of violating a school's alcohol or drug policy and I cite a couple of cases here. One of them is the Jake and Josey poster, this infamous and very highly sexist poster where it says, "JAKE was drunk. JOSIE was drunk. Jake and Josie HOOKED UP. Josie could NOT consent. The next day JAKE was charged with RAPE. A woman who is intoxicated cannot give her legal consent." Okay. Well if they're both drunk and under our state's affirmative consent

law, supposedly, neither can consent. They both under what our current policy is, theoretically they both raped each other. How do we know Josie wasn't the instigator? You know so it's very easy that, maybe they both are potential misconduct and so Josie or perhaps even Jake runs to the Title IX office and makes a complaint and under this, you know they're exempt from, they're actually, you know because they could have potentially been held liable for violating the school alcohol policy, now they're given blanket immunity.

And I cite another case from the University of Cincinnati where there was another mutual drunken hookup and the male student beat the female student to the Title IX office, in this case it was whoever came first rather than simply a bias in favor of female students over male students. So I have a real problem with that. Again, I have concerns about the campus climate survey but I also think it's important to understand in terms of campus climate, we need to deal with the underlying problem here of the loose moral culture general. People shouldn't be hooking up. People need to be taught morals, decency, modesty. I hope we can reject, we can find an alternative and reject this bill and deal with the racism, ableism, and misandry of the current system of kangaroo courts. Let us defend both due process and change the moral culture on our college campuses that says that sex fest and BDSM are somehow more consensual than marriage and commitment, and the only thing for intimacy is an enthusiastic yes. Yes might mean yes, but it does not mean kosher. Thank you very much.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Does anybody have any questions for Mr. Mendelsohn? I guess not. Thank you very much.

STEPHEN MENDELSON: You're welcome.