



**Testimony for the  
Higher Education and  
Workforce Advancement Committee of  
Jennifer Widness, President  
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges  
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On behalf of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges, I am submitting testimony on three bills before you today:

- **S.B. 109: AN ACT MODIFYING THE CONNECTICUT AUTOMATIC ADMISSIONS PROGRAM**
- **H.B. 5128: AN ACT REQUIRING DISCLOSURE OF SCHOLARSHIP DISPLACEMENT POLICIES AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**
- **H.B. 5129: AN ACT CONCERNING SUBSTANCE-FREE HOUSING ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES**
- **H.B. 5127: AN ACT REQUIRING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR THE DELIVERY OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN PRISONS**

**S.B. 109: AN ACT MODIFYING THE CONNECTICUT AUTOMATIC ADMISSIONS PROGRAM**, seeks to change the requirement for a minimum class rank percentile to a minimum grade point average for students to qualify for admission to a participating institution of higher education through the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program. Currently the CCIC institutions that participate in this program are Goodwin University, Mitchell College, University of Saint Joseph, University of New Haven and University of Bridgeport.

**CCIC support this legislation.** In the inaugural year of the Automatic Admissions program, all five of our participating institutions relied on GPA to determine eligibility in this program. In conversations with school counselors, it is our understanding that high schools have moved away from class rank as a key metric for student success. It is the preferred metric over class rank for students, institutions and guidance counselors.

**H.B. 5128: AN ACT REQUIRING DISCLOSURE OF SCHOLARSHIP DISPLACEMENT POLICIES AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**, seeks to require each institution of higher education to disclose its scholarship displacement policies to each prospective and current student and the legislature.

CCIC does not oppose providing information to the legislature regarding its scholarship displacement policies by January 1, 2025.

CCIC does have some concerns about mandating this information be shared with all current and prospective students in the financial aid package notice.

State law presently requires institutions of higher education to provide uniform financial aid information via the Federal financial aid shopping sheet, now known as the [College Financing](#)

[Plan](#). See, [C.G.S. 10a-55u](#). Sharing scholarship displacement policies is not a part of the federal form.

Connecticut was one of the first and only states in the country to mandate the federal financial aid form be utilized for its public and private colleges. We are reluctant to endorse an additional mandate on institutions in this area, especially when schools are struggling to package students promptly given the nightmare of the Better FAFSA roll-out.

We would ask Committee members to consider simply requiring information sharing with the legislature at this time.

**H.B. 5129: AN ACT CONCERNING SUBSTANCE-FREE HOUSING ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES** seeks to require institutions of higher education to provide options for substance-free housing on campus.

CCIC opposes this legislation. Federal law requires all campuses that receive federal financial aid be drug free, including cannabis. Given that the majority of undergraduates are under the age of 21, alcohol is prohibited for the most part in on-campus housing.

A number of our institutions already offer substance free housing for students that request it. We believe that the need and availability of substance free housing should be left up to the institutions to determine.

**H.B. 5127: AN ACT REQUIRING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR THE DELIVERY OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN PRISONS**, requires the Department of Corrections to conduct a needs assessment of the facilities, materials and staffing required for the delivery of postsecondary education programs in correctional institutions. This is a key recommendation that came out of NEBHE's [Commission on the Future of Higher Education in Prison](#).

CCIC supports this legislation. A number of our member institutions presently offer Prison Education programs in the state, including Trinity College, Wesleyan University, Yale University, Quinnipiac University and the University of New Haven. With the return of Pell grant funding for approved prison education programs, there are opportunities now to expand this work. However, the Department of Corrections has limited capacity. A needs assessment would help identify areas where additional investments are needed to support additional post-secondary training in prison.