



Testimony of Dennis Bogusky
President, Federation of Technical College Teachers, Local 1942, AFTCT, AFL-CIO

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
March 3, 2020

Good morning Senator Haskell, Representative Haddad, and member of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is Dennis Bogusky and am the President of the Federation of Technical College Teachers AFT Local 1942. We represent faculty both teaching and non-teaching at the 5 merged Community Technical Colleges (Norwalk NCC, New Haven GWCC, Hartford CCC, Norwich TRCC, and Waterbury NVCC). I wish to give support on **HB 5353 An Act Funding the Debt Free Community College.**

Debt Free Community Colleges are gaining popularity nationally. Twenty states including our neighbors Rhode Island and New York have adopted such Legislation. These states have realized tremendous enrollment growth at their public Community Colleges. This translates into more of their Citizens attending college, thus enhancing the education and skills and graduation rates of these states Citizens.

Internationally, Connecticut has been known for its educated populace and highly skilled workforce. We are also recognized as leaders in both innovation and production.

Approximately 70% of our jobs either require or will require at least a Community College Education (Degree or Certificate).

Nationally we rank 3rd in the amount of student debt our citizens are carrying.

This has a negative impact on our States Economy, specifically our Housing Market.

Recent Graduates experience difficulty in obtaining a mortgage allowing them to become homeowners. This inordinate debt also impairs their everyday lives.

Passage of HB 5353 would go a long way toward:

1. Easing the amount of Student Debt.
2. Increasing Community College Enrollment and Graduation Rates.
3. Addressing our industry's educational and skill needs.
4. Creating greater wage and income growth.
5. Adding value to our Cities and Towns.
6. Maintaining and increasing Connecticut's leadership in both innovation, production and keeping us on the "cutting edge".

Lastly and most importantly are the benefits to our students including, more time to focus on their studies, ability to complete a degree or certificate in a timely manner, and preparation to enter the workforce.

I urge passage of HB5353.

Thank you
Dennis J. Bogusky