



Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges

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

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Good evening Representative Walker, Senator Osten and members of the Appropriations Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 5005, *An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021*.

My name is Maureen Chalmers and I am the President of the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges (4Cs) which represents full and part-time faculty and staff at the state's twelve community colleges.

Community College students are worthy of your investment. Our students overwhelmingly stay in Connecticut to live and work. Our colleges work with businesses in our communities to create academic programs, so that our graduates have the skills to thrive. A 2019 economic impact report (https://www.ct.edu/files/pdfs/CSCU_MainReport_1617_Final.pdf) showed that 1 out of 19 jobs in Connecticut are supported by CSCU and its students. The same report demonstrated that for every dollar of taxpayer support in CSCU, they receive \$3.80 in added tax revenue and savings.

The 4Cs have also been long proponents of debt-free community college. We understand the fiscal challenges that the state currently faces, but we urge this committee to fund the tuition and fee free program as it was passed last year – open to all Connecticut residents that graduated from Connecticut high schools and with no income limitations.

In the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, there are currently four bills that the 4Cs encourages legislators to support to increase the credibility, accountability and transparency of the CSCU system moving forward:

- *An Act Requiring Training for the Members of the Governing Boards of the Institutions of Higher Education in the State*
- *An Act Requiring Legislative Approval for the Merger or Closing of Institutions Within the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities*
- *An Act Concerning the Budget of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities*
- *An Act Requiring Financial Transparency of the Students First Plan*

Thank you.