

Testimony of: Mia Carlone  
School of Dental Medicine, Class of 2021

In the second grade, the big field trip that had all the kids buzzing was the day we would go to the Connecticut state capitol building. For weeks leading up to the trip, we would sit in a circle and memorize all of the important facts about our state, presumably so we could appropriately flex our knowledge should we happen upon any Senators who felt like quizzing a 7 year old on what the state bird or flower are (the American robin and the mountain laurel, of course). When the day finally came, I remember peering out of the school bus window as it hurdled down I-84 east and catching my first glimpse of the golden domed roof and white marble façade shining over the Hartford skyline. I had never been to Disney world, but to me this was pretty close to any fairytale castle I could have possibly dreamt up.

Since that day at the capitol, it has been easy for me to always choose Connecticut. In my days at as a UConn undergrad, I was blessed to be afforded every opportunity of a private school education at a public school price. I even became a member of the UConn Marching band, lovingly nicknamed “The Pride of Connecticut.” Real fans know that you *really* have to love Connecticut to stay a loyal fan of the UConn football team, but that’s just how much I love my state.

When my time in Storrs came to an end, I knew that the only rightful place for me would have to be UConn School of Dental Medicine at UConn Health. I had dreamt of going there even as that little girl on the field trip, telling anyone who would listen that no, I was not going to be a princess or astronaut when I grew up-I was going to be a *dentist*! The fact that Connecticut has given me the opportunity to realize that little girl’s dream is something I could never repay (something I will never have to say about my student loan debt thanks to in-state tuition!).

After receiving my DMD, I hope to start giving back to the state that has given me so much. At UConn Dental we learn above all things that with the gift of an outstanding education comes the responsibility to serve one’s community and provide care to those who need it most. In a time in our country’s history that has many Americans forgoing dental care because they simply cannot afford it, UConn Dental continues to provide affordable care to Connecticut’s vulnerable populations. I cannot think of a better way to say thank you to Connecticut than to help its citizens smile. This is what I hope to do with all that Connecticut has given me.

Thank you for your time,

Mia Carlone  
Class of 2021