

Testimony of: Jeremy Figueroa-Ortiz  
School of Dental Medicine, Class of 2020

Good morning, my name is Jeremy Figueroa-Ortiz. I am a two-time husky for both my undergraduate degree and now dental school, where I am finishing my fourth year. First, I would like to thank you for taking the time to hold this hearing and offering us the opportunity for our voices to be heard.

As a New Britain native, I hold immense pride in my state. Starting my journey as one of four children to teenaged parents in a three-bedroom apartment with 13 other family members, I stand in front of you humbled and blessed, for the opportunity to speak but also for the opportunity to be amongst my peers in this dignified institution.

At a UConn sponsored event, a conference administrator picked me up from my house to ensure my attendance. Additionally, they made the effort to keep in touch with me throughout high school, exposing me to different facets of academia such as research. Fast forward to college, something that I never imagined being possible as I knew almost no one who had attended. Here, I found myself doing more research, meeting lifelong mentors, achieving academic successes such as honors, being a New England Scholar for consecutive years, and eventually graduating Magna cum laude all with UConn support.

Now, as a dental student, UConn continues to support my growth: recently funding my research at the National Institutes of Health to work on bone regeneration, affording me the possibility to attend a national Hispanic Dental Association conference further expanding my network, and encouraging my participation in externships as I to strive toward my goal of becoming an Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon.

These are the reasons I am here and why I yearn to remain in Connecticut as a practicing surgeon for our communities. Finding one location with innumerable selfless, driven, dedicated, passionate professionals seems nearly unlikely- but we have it. I cannot place enough emphasis on your role in this.

This would be impossible without your investment in our institution and in our education as the future of healthcare in Connecticut. Without you, the 600 of our combined Medical and Dental students at UConn could not be here. Without you, we would probably not have almost 90% of in-state students in the dental school. We probably would not be amongst the highest ranked dental schools nationally. The return on investment on your end is immeasurable, thank you for how you have contributed to our education and thank you for all of your future contributions.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Best,  
Jeremy Figueroa-Ortiz