

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Committee. My name is Randy Lebron and I am a Certified Nursing Assistant at UConn Health in the Intensive Care Unit. I have been working at this hospital for 21 years.

I am here today to ask that the committee continue to fund UConn Health. I would also like to express my concerns about the potential privatization of the state's only public hospital. Having a public hospital helps keep healthcare costs down across the state. Keeping UConn public also makes it accountable to the people of Connecticut, and give low-income families a place to receive the care they need.

I came to UConn in 1999, when I was 23 years old. At that time, this hospital gave me the opportunity to pursue a real career. Later in life, I came to realize that my job here provided benefits and a source of income to support my family and provide them with opportunities to succeed. Now, at 44 years old, it gives me hope for a smooth transition into retirement. Any disruption of this timeline for me and my colleagues will lead to a domino effect of hardship that will be felt by future generations.

Being a Nurse Assistant in an ICU is difficult work all around, both emotionally, physically, and psychologically. I am on the frontlines of caring for patients and their loved ones. My day to day care consists of moving patients to make them comfortable, diagnostic work such as drawing blood and monitoring vital signs, and performing echocardiograms to monitor heart activity. I also stock equipment and provide assistance to nurses and doctors. I like the fact that I can make a difference in my job; that my work impacts the patients and families I care for.

However, this job can be extremely demanding sometimes. When the unit is short staffed, nurses and aides are overwhelmed, which results in negative morale. After the renovations two years ago, our patient's numbers increased, while our staffing numbers stayed roughly the same. Our individual workload has almost doubled. This means that patients have to wait longer for care, and the care they receive is not as thorough as I would like to provide.

I hope that my story will make an impact on the future of this hospital. Please continue to fund UConn Health so that we can continue to provide the quality of care that all patients deserve.