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My name is Bruce Mayer. I am a Professor and Vice-Chair in the Department of Genetics and Genome Sciences at UConn Health. I am also an officer of UCHC-AAUP, the union that represents the faculty.

My colleagues and I are proud to do research at UConn Health. My laboratory has worked for over 25 years on the basic biology of cancer—how cancer cells differ from normal cells, and how we can use those differences to develop better and more precise therapies. Over the years my lab has been supported by millions of dollars of grant funding from the National Institutes of Health, but recently that funding has been much more difficult to obtain. One reason is that at UConn Health, we can support fewer people per grant dollar because of extraordinarily high fringe rates, due in large part to the legacy costs associated with the unfunded pension and retirement healthcare liabilities. That means my lab is less productive than labs at other institutions, and it also means I can hire fewer of the high-tech workers we should be encouraging to live (and pay taxes) in Connecticut.

I implore the legislature to work to find a long-term solution to these legacy costs. As you know, state employees hired over the last decade do not contribute to unfunded pension liability problem—they pay the actuarial cost sufficient to support their future retirement. It is unfair and counterproductive to impose on these UConn researchers the costs associated with the failures of past decades. Just the entire state benefited (through lower taxes) from past underfunding of employee retirement costs, the entire state now needs to be part of the solution to this problem.