



# CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Katherine Bergeron  
*President*

## Memorandum

*To:* Finance Committee

*From:* Katherine Bergeron, President

*Re:* Senate Bill 873: An Act Mitigating Adverse Tax Consequences Resulting from Employees Working Remotely During COVID-19, and Concerning the Removal of Liens on the Property of Public Assistance Beneficiaries and a Three-Tiered Grants in Lieu of Taxes Program

*Date:* February 16, 2021

I am grateful for the opportunity to share my views on Senate Bill No. 873. I write, first and foremost, in recognition of a longstanding partnership with the City of New London, a city that would benefit greatly from the increased PILOT funding outlined in Sec. 11 of the bill. Therefore, **I express my strongest possible support of SB 873**, which seeks to increase PILOT for those municipalities with significant non-taxable property on their balance sheets.

The State of Connecticut's PILOT for College and Hospitals program recognizes that colleges, hospitals, and other nonprofits serve the public good and provide critical resources that benefit Connecticut residents, not just the host communities in which they are located. PILOT provides compensation to these host communities because non-profits are exempt from paying property taxes.

Connecticut College, like all nonprofit institutions across the country, is tax exempt. This status is critical and provides the support we need to carry out our mission to educate thoughtful, discerning leaders and engaged citizens. And, as an important part of that mission, our students, faculty, and staff are pleased to contribute to the educational, economic, and cultural life of New London through teaching, volunteering, and other forms of public service. In turn, we are glad to share our cultural, social, educational, and natural resources with the citizens of our region.

We have been especially proud to serve the greater New London region during the coronavirus pandemic. In March 2020, the College donated many hundreds of surgical masks and N-95 respirators to Ledge Light

Health District and the New London Fire Department, while faculty in our science departments sent over 5,000 gloves to the Lawrence & Memorial Hospital. When our own campus and the State were in lockdown, we made our beautiful Arboretum available to local citizens needing a safe place to retreat from their homes. We contributed produce and food to the New London Community Meal Center, the New London Area Food Pantry, and the Salvation Army. Through a partnership with the City of New London, we contributed dormitory furniture to a new center created to house homeless people infected with COVID-19. And we offered temporary housing in one of our own campus residences, Abbey House, to first responders in need of care or protection from the virus. Four of our students stayed in the region during the height of the pandemic last spring to work on the front lines as emergency medical technicians. We have made other critical staff resources available, as well. For example, our dean of institutional equity and inclusion, John McKnight, responded to Mayor Michael Passero's call to lead a special task force on humane policing that Passero assembled in June, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. The task force met weekly from June through December, and delivered its report to the Mayor in January 2021. During that same time, we let the State know that we would be willing to make our campus available as a vaccination site. The list goes on and on. My point is: we have been and continue to be exceedingly proud to support our city and region in all of these ways.

Increasing the funding of PILOT acknowledges the value that nonprofit institutions like Connecticut College contribute to cities like New London. This has been even more vital during our current crisis, as nonprofits have found more and more creative ways to support their communities.

On behalf of everyone at Connecticut College in the City of New London, I urge you to move this bill forward with alacrity. Thank you for your leadership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katherine Bergeron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line above the first few letters.