

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

GREGORY S. WOODWARD, PRESIDENT

**Testimony to the Finance Committee Regarding Sec. 11 of SB 873:
Three-Tiered Grants in Lieu of Taxes Program
February 12, 2021**

The University of Hartford is committed to advancing the health, wellness, and education needs of our surrounding communities and region. The PILOT program recognizes that we, in addition to hospitals and other non-profits that concentrate in urban centers across the state, serve the public good by providing critical resources and benefits that assist all Connecticut residents, not just those living in municipalities in which the institutions are located. We strongly support the proposed Sec. 11 of SB 873, which seeks to increase PILOT for those municipalities that have a lower net grand list per capita, in order to better aid the municipalities where we educate, work and live.

Non-profit colleges and universities are tax exempt in every state in the country. This status provides necessary and important support, allowing colleges and universities to pursue their basic mission of teaching, research, and service. The University of Hartford, like many organizations and industries across the state and country, is experiencing the financial impact of the pandemic. We are doing our best to manage the many additional expenses required to safely educate our students and protect our communities. Despite these challenges, we continue to make significant contributions, financial and in-kind, to the surrounding municipalities and residents. We take great pride in our recent efforts to house Hartford's first responders, produce PPE for regional healthcare workers, and loan out our medical equipment to healthcare partners. We continue to offer scholarship programs for students from Hartford and Bloomfield, in addition to a large variety of community programming in academics, arts, and athletics. Our campus is also home to a CREC Magnet School (leased at \$1 per year) and the University High School of Science and Engineering, where students take free college courses.

We champion leveling of the playing field for the neediest of communities and this proposal achieves that objective in a very specific and tangible manner. This is never more critical than in this time of national crisis and pandemic response. By renewing the commitment to fully funding the PILOT program, the state will supply funds based on identified needs, supporting the equity in resources in a way that same-rate reimbursement cannot achieve. This support must be funded from the state budget, not dependent on unrealistic funding from colleges, universities, healthcare, and non-profits that contribute so much to our communities and citizens.

We support and endorse this proposal as one of many levers that can be applied to create a model that equal opportunity and sustainable resources for our communities that need it most.



Gregory S. Woodward
President