



Testimony for the
Appropriations Committee
Victoria A. Hampton, University Director of Financial Aid
Quinnipiac University
March 4, 2021

On behalf of Quinnipiac University, I am submitting testimony concerning funding for the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program.

Quinnipiac University educates over 7,000 undergraduate students annually, of which 22% are from Connecticut. Our Connecticut students rely on assistance from the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program. In addition to providing financial support, the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program demonstrates to our Connecticut students that the state values them and wants to help them succeed. The appropriations for this program have not been increased since FY 15.

The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program supports some of our neediest students. Last year, this program allowed us to help 150 Connecticut residents, 103 of whom were also eligible for the Federal Pell Grant program. The average family income of those students was approximately \$29,000 per year. **We enrolled an additional 535 eligible students from Connecticut to whom we could not award Roberta B. Willis, due to insufficient funding.** This leaves 78% of our eligible Connecticut students with without any financial support from the state. These otherwise eligible Connecticut residents have an average family income of \$42,000. These students would greatly benefit from educational support from the state. Though financing an education is challenging for Connecticut families in any year, it will be especially difficult this year because of the economic impacts of the pandemic.

Quinnipiac's Roberta B. Willis Scholarship recipients very high academic achievers, with a mean Grade Point Average of 3.92. These are students Connecticut needs to grow our economy and contribute to the well-being of our fellow residents. In fact, over 25% of our Roberta B. Willis recipients this year are pursuing degrees in Health Sciences, Nursing, and other related fields. Helping students succeed in these and other critical fields at this time will have widespread benefits for the state.

Thank you in advance for voting to increase funding for the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program, which is so crucial to our ability to support Connecticut students in their pursuit of higher education.