

Testimony against Governor's Proposed Budget for Higher Education Agencies

H.B. No. 6439 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING
JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly's Appropriations Committee

Submit to: APPTestimony@cga.ct.gov

To: Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee:

From: Mitchel Austin Kvedar, State Affairs Coordinator of UConn Undergraduate Student
Government, Co-Director of Sunrise Movement CT

Hello! My name is Mitchel Kvedar, and I am a junior studying Political Science and Environmental Studies here at UConn. I am from Burlington, Connecticut and I plan to work with environmental non-profits or within the political field here in CT once I graduate. This testimony is addressed to my State Representative John Piscapo, and State Senator Derek Slap, as well as the honorable members of the appropriations committee.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, now which is nearly a year old, it has left nothing untouched, with higher education across the board taking a brunt of the financial hit. A number of programs have been cut, and discontinued due to such here at UConn. Speaking as a recent transfer student to the University, in order to best pursue my passions and dreams, I was only enabled to do so due to the generous aid programs, and I am worried about potential reductions to need, and merit based financial aid for all our future huskies. Students grapple already with the extremely high cost of a higher education, and take out exorbitant loans to cover their schooling. We could see higher tuition rates, on top of a rate that grows nearly every year - with or without budget cuts. As a student that transferred in order to explore a new major option, in environmental studies, that my previous school did not carry - I too worry about the potential elimination or mergers, of some majors or programs to help bring down costs, no matter how passionate the department or students.

The State of Connecticut funds about a fourth of UConn's operating budget, which keeps our flagship university running as it should - as the premier institution for future achievers in our state. We need to ensure that Connecticut's legacy as a leading, if not the, education state continues to stand strong, and provide our future leaders of tomorrow. Just as Mr. Cardona, the new U.S. Secretary of Education recently demonstrates - a UConn alumni. himself. In order to continue this development of our workers and leaders of the future, the legislature must continue its investment in UConn Nation - as the lifeblood of our great state is closely tied to its strength of its higher education. This year, lets #InvestInUConn

Mitchel Kvedar
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HB 6374
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