

Good evening, Members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Erin Rogalin, and I am a senior nursing student at Naugatuck Valley Community College. Today I want to briefly discuss my experience in the nursing program during this pandemic.

When I was in my second semester of the nursing program, last March, when this pandemic started to hit our area, my classmates and I were pulled from our clinical assignments at hospital sites and immediately transitioned to full virtual learning. Luckily for us our instructors did not miss a beat. During the time we would have been learning on a hospital floor we began working on clinical case studies, online simulations of patient situations, and online medication administration simulations. In the following semesters we were able to get back into our clinical sites part time, and we continued to use these supplemental exercises to ensure we were receiving a well-rounded clinical education to best prepare us for our future career in nursing. Without all these resources there is no way I would be ready to go out and join the front lines to fight against COVID-19, and all the new variants of this disease, after graduating this May.

But it is not just this nursing program that has readied me for this fight. It was the English and communication classes I took that helped me develop the competences to communicate with professional and medical terminology with my colleagues and in layman's terms with my patients. It was the math classes I took that gave me the skills to make accurate medication dosage calculations. It was the many science classes I took that gave me an in depth understanding of the anatomy and physiology of my patients as well as an understanding of how each type of medication actually interacts with each body system. It is because of the education provided to me from my school, and because of the extra resources provided to me during this

pandemic, that I can confidently say I am ready to join the fight on the front lines here on the Connecticut work force.

Members of the Appropriations Committee, I want to sincerely thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. It is because of your past support and funding of education in Connecticut that I have this opportunity. And it is because of your past support and funding of education in Connecticut that I have the opportunity to receive my nursing education at Naugatuck Valley Community College, and that I will be graduating debt free with every door open to me to continue pursuing my education. It is because of your past support and funding of education in Connecticut that I will become a successful worker in a sustainable career with the ability to pay taxes, buy a house, and stay in this state that I love. Please continue to give others the opportunities you provided to me. They want to stay here, join the workforce here, become taxpayers and homeowners here. But they can only do that if the access and affordability continues. So, Members of the Appropriations Committee, as the voice of not only my fellow nursing students, but of all of my fellow students in all degree programs, I ask you to please continue funding our futures here in Connecticut. Thank you.