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THE CLERK:

On Page 26, Calendar 441, substitute for Senate Bill Number 40, AN ACT CONCERNING COLLEGE READINESS AND COMPLETION. Favorable report by the Committee on Appropriations.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Distinguished Chair of the Higher Education Committee, Representative Willis.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Good evening.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Mr. Speaker, I move for acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the Bill in concurrence with the Senate.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Question is on acceptance and passage. Will you explain the Bill, please madam?

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill is intended to increase student success with a redesign of the delivery of developmental education at our State Universities, our CSU, State Universities and our

Community Colleges. Many of our students lack the academic preparation they need to be successful in college. Obviously the best situation would be to strengthen high school students so they are prepared. But, presently 60 to 70 percent of the freshman entering our public universities and colleges require one or more remedial education courses before they are ready for credit bearing college courses. Our present remediation system works for too few. We needed to redesign how we deliver needed learning support. In 2009, the program review and investigation report identified remedial course work as a barrier to completing a degree or certificate. The program review and investigation committee in its wisdom recommended that we needed a greatly improved approach to remedial and developmental education by replacing stand-alone remedial courses with introductory credit courses. The purpose of this legislation is to bring credit bearing courses for students as soon as possible. The concept makes sense. Instead of wasting time and money in remedial classes for no credit, students would be placed in courses with built in support. An English 101 and a math 101 class for instance, could meet two or three times a week with

regular instruction and then one session or more would be embedded learning support for that particular class. The real cost of developmental education is not the cost to our colleges. It is the cost to our students, to their families and our state's economy. It is a loss of time, and decreased likelihood of student's success. Mr. Speaker, the Clerk has an amendment, LCO 3151. I move that the reading of the amendment be waived and I be allowed to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Clerk is in possession of LCO Number 3151, previously designated as Senate Amendment Schedule "A". Mr. Clerk please call the amendment.

THE CLERK:

LCO 3151, Senate "A", offered by Senator Bye, Representative Willis and Senator Boucher.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Gentleman as asked to leave the chamber to summarize. Is there any objection. Hearing none, Representative Willis.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This amendment adds a faculty advisory board in the development of the intensive college readiness program along with the

Board of Regents and the PK Account through 20 council. It also adds one remedial course for adult learners and English language learners. I move adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Question is on adoption of Senate "A". Will you remark further on Senate "A"? Will you remark?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Opposed Nay.

The Ayes have it.

The amendment is adopted.

Representative Willis.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, the clerk has another amendment, LCO 3601. I move that the reading of the amendment be waived and I be allowed to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Clerk is in possession of LCO Number 3601, previously designated as Senate Amendment Schedule

"B". Mr. Clerk please call the amendment.

THE CLERK:

LCO 3601, Senate "B", offered by Representative Willis, Representative LeGeyt and Representative Sawyer.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Gentleman as asked to leave the chamber to summarize. Is there any objection. Hearing none, Representative Willis.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

This changes a section that refers to evaluations that would be taken while students are still in a secondary school and what this does is change the wording from testing to evaluation. This is important because we wanted to make it clear that our public schools are utilizing exiting instruments like the mastery or the CAP test in trying to make evaluations early on for students to find out if they're on track to be college ready. It also adds a reference, a special provision for the deaf and the hearing -- hard of hearing. I move adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Question is on adoption. Will you remark further on Senate Amendment Schedule "B"? Will you remark

further on Senate Amendment Schedule "B"?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Opposed Nay.

The Ayes have it.

The amendment is adopted.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

Representative Willis.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Yes, I'll just briefly do a summary of the Bill. The first section of the bill directs public institutions to use multiple assessment tools, high school transcripts and placement tests to determine students skill level and to determine whether or not they need learning supports in order to be successful in college level work. If support is indicated, the college shall offer entry level credit bearing courses with additional embedded support. Section two of the bill requires that by 2014 K through 12 education and public higher education need to be aligned with common course standards and Section three of the Bill

includes a provision for the assessment instruments to be used in 8th and 10th grade to determine if students are on track to be ready for college level work. Through these existing assessment tools, teachers, parents and students will have a clear understanding about whether the student is on track for college. Giving these assessments early can address academic deficiencies before they reach college age and they have time to address them if it's necessary. I urge my colleagues to support this proposal before us.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, madam.

Distinguished Ranking Member of the Higher Education Committee, Representative LeGeyt.

REP. LeGEYT (17th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill is a good intended and good start to correct a serious problem that occurs with the remediation that is necessary in our Community Colleges. I urge my colleagues to support it. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir.

Dean of the House of Representative, Representative Mary Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support this workforce Bill and thank Representative Willis and the Higher Education Committee for their work. In our landmark study of the state's workforce, alignment of secondary education and employment program review and investigations found that Connecticut ranked in the bottom 20 percent in associates degree completion rates. This was the case despite the fact that more than half of Community College students, 55 percent, reported that their goal was to obtain an associate's degree. The committee's researchers, Mary Ellen Duffy and Miriam Kluger found that remedial course work is a barrier to completing a degree or certificate and that 76 percent of students who require remediation in reading and 63 percent who require it in math, do not earn a degree. Yet, we are spending twelve and a half million annually on remedial programs. So, obviously the state needs to improve K through 12 education so students learn the material in high school and for students already in Community College program review and investigations recommends a new approach to remedial education based on successful approaches in other states. Specifically we found that embedding

remedial material within a course of interest to the student, that is including it within the job training courses that the student chooses, is more successful than having the student take a stand-alone course. And, the additional benefit is that embedded instruction also qualifies the student for the Pell Grant program. So, PRI recommended that the state replace the stand-alone courses with introductory credit courses that integrate remedial skills into workforce instruction. This is a more effective use of scarce state resources and I hope you will all support it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, Representative.

Gentle woman from Monroe, Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you just a couple of questions to the proponent.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Proceed.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, sir. When we talk about content and embedded curricula, we're talking about a form of tutorial versus remediation, am I correct? Through

you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Willis.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Through you, we're talking about learning support; developmental Ed being offered embedded as part of, you know, an introductory course on English or on math. So, you'd be taking a credit bearing course, but you would take your learning support along with it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, madam. Through you, Mr. Speaker, with regards to the curriculum requirements, say for a particular degree, how does the embedded content impact on the requirements for the actual course for that particular degree? I guess what I'm saying is, I understanding you have a core curriculum most freshman take that's kind of a general, so I understand how all of the embedded content will happen there, the tutorial in that, but when we move into the specific course work for your degree work, how would that -- I don't -- I'm not quite sure how that's going to work?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Willis.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it really is the introductory courses that emphasize reading, writing and math. That's the way it's done now with remediation, that's where it's offered. Once the students have been successful in that, then they're able to successfully go on to take other -- and prepare to take other courses. I should also say the way it's structured now, you could take another course that didn't require that remediation. Another elective or --

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the gentle woman for her answers.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, madam.

Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Will you remark further on the Bill as amended?

If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber. The House is taking a roll call vote. Members to the chamber please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? If so, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

And, the Clerk will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill 40 as amended by Senate "A" and "B", in concurrence with the Senate.

Total number voting	139
Necessary for adoption	70
Those voting Yea	127
Those voting Nay	12
Those absent and not voting	12

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The Bill as amended is passed in concurrence.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 427.

THE CLERK:

On Page 24, Calendar 427, substitute for Senate Bill Number 350, AN ACT REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MANUFACTURER MERCURY THERMOSTAT COLLECTION AND

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THE CHAIR:

Absolutely.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further?

Senator Doyle.

SENATOR DOYLE:

Yes, Madam President.

If there's no objection, I would move this bill to the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 12, Calendar 135, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 40, AN ACT CONCERNING COLLEGE READINESS AND COMPLETION, favorable report by the Committee for Higher Education.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye, good afternoon.

SENATOR BYE:

Good afternoon, Madam President.

I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and move passage of the bill and waive its reading and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

On acceptance and adoption, will you remark further?

SENATOR BYE:

Yes, Madam Clerk.

Senate Bill 40 is a bill designed to change the way that Connecticut delivers academic supports to college students; will be moving from stand-alone remedial classes that charge students for credits that do not advance them toward graduation to a system that supports students in classes that are moving them toward a degree.

Madam President, the Clerk is in possession of an amendment, LCO 3151. I asked that it be called and I be able to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 3151, Senate "A," offered by Senators Bye, Boucher and Representative Willis.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

I move the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

The motion is on acceptance and adoption of the amendment.

Please proceed, ma'am.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Madam President.

This amendment does several things to the bill that I'll summarize very briefly and then be able to talk about them more thoroughly in the context of the bill. And I'm happy to answer questions about the amendment, obviously.

What this bill does is that it adds faculty to a group that will be developing intensive college readiness programs, because they are the ones working with the students and

have a great deal of knowledge. We are adding them.

It also adds an allowable one semester remedial -- one semester of remediation for students. If approved by the board of regents, this is designed to support special populations such as English-language learners and perhaps hearing impaired students. It also moves implementation of Section 2 to the year 2016 to be in line with high school graduation that has completed the common course standards.

And one other change that the amendment makes is it requires a report within a year from the board of regents working with the P-20 Council and faculty about the best approach for adults who are returning to post secondary ed and will want that by 2013.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark? Will you remark on the amendment? Will you remark on the amendment? Seeing none, all in favor, please say aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed?

The amendment passes.

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Madam President. I'll walk the Chamber through this bill briefly, and I'm happy to answer questions.

Senate Bill 40 is really a sea of change for Connecticut and I think gives great hope to Connecticut students in our community colleges and Connecticut State University system. What this bill does is it says if a public institution decides that a student needs support to be successful in a college-level class they can follow one

of two paths.

If they need a whole lot of remediation they can take an intensive college readiness program that will be delivered before the beginning of the next semester after that assessment. And this will be developed by the board of regents, the faculty advisory committee, and the P-20 Council, which is a group from across the educational spectrum from preschool to age 20, recognizing that the issue of remediation in college is one that is a function of the entire education system.

If students are beyond the need for intensive readiness but need some support, they'll receive embedded support. So that is sort of the overriding premise of the bill.

Section D of part 1 also says very clearly that after fall semester -- after the start of the fall semester 2014, no public institution of higher education shall offer any remedial support, including remedial courses that are not embedded with a corresponding course and moving students toward a degree. The only exception to that is what I just explained in the amendment, of one semester embedded, supportive remedial semester.

And then, Madam President, through you, another thing that this bill does is it makes links. It asks higher education institutions to make links with local school districts to do an early assessment of students' likelihood to be successful in college.

And if it's determined that students will not be successful in college, given where they land on that assessment, students will be notified, parents will be notified, and teachers and schools will be notified to assure that by 11th grade everybody knows we better get working and the student is going to need some intensive intervention. I believe that's an important part of the bill, and I also already discussed needing an approach for adults returning to school.

So with that, Madam President, I'm happy to answer questions and I thank the Chamber for their indulgence.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I rise to support the bill before us, Senate Bill 40, and also recognize the Higher Education Committee for tackling such a difficult issue.

This is an unfortunate outcome of the achievement gap that we have in Connecticut that is manifesting itself into an overabundance of remedial courses needed for those entering our community college system or higher educational system.

They obviously -- there they have had difficulty prior to arriving where some of the basic skills, particularly in the area of composition and in math where there seems to be a great deal of distance between what's really required to be successful in college and from what they gained in that K-12 level.

So this bill does tend to address some of that. And, in essence, it also addresses the very real and difficult issue of higher costs to higher education and our inability to have more people access it in a way that is affordable to them and thereby restricting the number of people that can gain a higher educational system. And that's really real.

We found that in the worst cases there are times when there are almost two years' worth, four semesters of remedial courses before a student can go on to a credited course for their degree. That is very costly and many times exhausts a lot of these scholarships that these students are on.

And so I think that this is a movement to try to reduce those costs. If there is remedial courses necessary, it should be done for a short period of time, a semester and then, if so, then embedded with the coursework that gains them credit, again highlighting the issue of affordability, reducing costs and certainly saving a lot of their scholarship monies so that they can actually have a degree at the end of that and thereby getting a job

earlier and faster.

So it is a critical need. I think this bill tries to address that, and I'm sure that it will have maybe some other permutations as we move this forward. And I thank the chairs for their hard work on this particular bill.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark further?

Senator Looney?

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, would just move that this bill, as amended, be passed temporarily.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Page 12, Calendar 136, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 181, AN ACT REQUIRING THE STANDARD AND PREVAILING WAGE BE PAID TO CERTAIN EMPLOYEES OF EMPLOYERS WHO RECEIVED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENTITIES, favorable report of the Committee On Labor and Public Employees.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

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THE CLERK:

On page 32, Calendar 135, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 40, AN ACT CONCERNING COLLEGE READINESS AND COMPLETION, amended by Senate Amendment Schedule A, favorable report of the Committee on Appropriations.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

On acceptance and passage, will you remark?

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Clerk is in possession of LCO Number 3601. I ask that it be called and I be allowed to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 3601, Senate B, offered by Senators Bye, Boucher and Representatives Willis, LeGeyt and Sawyer.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

This amendment simply clarifies that it applies to the community colleges and CSUs, and not to UConn, because this bill is about remedial education and that --

I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

On adoption please remark.

SENATOR BYE:

This amendment simply clarifies that it applies to the community colleges and the CSUs, but not the University of Connecticut, because remedial education is not a part of their university.

The amendment also adds in the deaf and hearing-impaired program at community colleges for the Board of Regents to report back to us in one year to assure that the model of this bill will work for those students who are in a special program.

I move adoption. I moved adoption already. I'll move it again.

THE CHAIR:

Just to be extra special, sure.

Thank you, Senator Bye.

Will you remark further on the amendment?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.(sic)

Just for clarification, to you, through the -- through you, to the proponent of the amendment.

When we -- a little bit more detail on the hearing-impaired, as far as the type of instruction and how this bill affects them, for clarification for the body.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I'm happy to clarify now and give a little more context. This bill really is looking at accelerating students' success in the community college and moving them forward at a faster pace, while still getting the support they need to be successful. So it changes the way that support is given to students in our colleges.

This bill has had a lot of discussions with many groups and we've made many changes. And on a couple of occasions, we felt that there were -- we felt that there were two groups who need special consideration. The bill takes effect in about two and a half years from now, giving the campuses time to develop programs.

But for programs of older adults returning to college, and the deaf and hearing impaired, we felt that we wanted to report back within a year to be sure, working with those programs, the Board of Regents can determine that the model we have defined in this bill will work for those special populations.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President, for the clarification.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye, we have to adopt the amendment.

Will you remark further on the amendment?

Senator Prague.

SENATOR PRAGUE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, a question for Senator Bye, through you.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, madam.

SENATOR PRAGUE:

Thank you.

Senator Bye, the other day you and I talked about this bill and I just want to make sure I have a correct understanding, that people who do need remedial help will clearly get it.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Through you, Mr. President.

Speaking -- I'm speaking of the amendment right now, but I'm happy to answer Senator Prague's question.

And students, the way that support is delivered will be different, but students will have multiple, multiple modes of support if they need it.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Prague, we're on the amendment.

SENATOR PRAGUE:

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. President, to Senator Bye, thank you.

I just wanted to ascertain that I remembered correctly what you had said the other day.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Than you, senator.

Will you remark further on the amendment?

If not, I'll try your minds.

All those in favor, please signify by saying, aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Those opposed nay.

The ayes have it. The amendment is adopted.

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I'd now like to back up and give a little background about Senate Bill 40. The Higher Education Committee has spent a great deal of time on this bill making sure that we get it right. It represents a sea of change in the way that we deliver support to students in our community college, but a change that's been proven around the country to result in higher graduation rates for students, particularly students who are often disenfranchised.

So it's reported -- it's a result of a collaborative process on our committee, bipartisan support working with the Board of Regents, the CSU, the community colleges. The bill is much improved, thanks to the

input of college presidents, faculty, students.

I want to be very clear and stress that the supports for students are still in place, but that the delivery system of these supports are different. The language of the bill is purposely general, because in our higher education communities, there's a long-standing tradition of faculty input in curriculum design.

And so we have set the date out until the Fall of 2014 for the beginning of this, and faculty will have a period of time on the campuses to come up with embedded supports for students that work for them.

I want to thank Dr. Levinson and Dr. Ferro and the Connecticut Association for Human Services who've been fierce advocates for the students and have helped design this bill and helped us find models that keeps open access for students to higher ed and speed degree completion.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Than you, Senator.

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. President, thank you.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Oh, yes, of course. How could one not notice that?

Mr. President, this bill has received a great deal of inquiry and, in some cases, some concern. And as such, it would be good to clarify what some of those concerns that were brought forward would be.

Also, to ask through you, the proponent, to explain in

a little bit more detail that -- it was our understanding that there would be one semester of remedial and then, after that, there would be embedded services should more be required. And also, how the fact that the -- that the start of Fall semesters, that there would be -- the Connecticut's common core standards would be adopted as an indicator of readiness actually for college for our students, and also there would be appropriate other measurements for adults that would be going into the program as well.

So I think a little bit more detail could be required on the part of the proponent so that it could answer some of the questions that have come up by certain legislators that have asked me about the bill.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Through you, Mr. President.

I really appreciate the opportunity. I was trying not to take too much of the circle's time, but this is a very important change. So I'm happy to walk the Chamber through the bill.

One of the important things I think that this bill does is, for the first time, the P-20 Council is named in statute as a collaborative body. Because this isn't a problem of the community colleges, this is a problem of our education system in Connecticut, prenatal through college. And so the P-20 Council is named as a group that's going to help to come up with some intensive intervention for students. So that's Section 1.

The second part of Section 1 talks about how we're going to assess students. Currently, at our community colleges, every student has to pass something called the Accuplacer before they have access to any classes.

So, for example, to take an extreme example, a student

could get an A in high school calculus, take the Accuplacer, not pass it and be disallowed from taking entry-level math at a community college because they rely solely on this Accuplacer.

There may be some slight changes on campuses, but in a large meeting, that was represented to me. So this bill requires that our colleges use multiple measures. Because research shows that actually your high school transcript is a much better predictor of success in college than single test, so that is the second thing.

It's still -- the bill still allows students to be assessed and it also allows the colleges to require that a student take an intensive intervention class before the start of the next semester. So I think it's important to know there will still be a readiness test, if you will.

And if students test in need of some help they will be placed in classes with embedded support. Now the term "embedded support" has gotten a lot of attention because there's this thinking that we're demanding a certain approach. And, in fact, in working with our LCO, we've held to the term "embedded support" so it could be used broadly.

Embedded support could be something like classes offered alongside a class, students being required to do an online math program while they're taking introduction to math. But the reason we've stayed broad is so that the campuses that have various strengths on their campuses could use those strengths.

For example, in New Haven, there's a strong relationship with the adult ed program in that city. So they may make a collaboration with adult ed to offer embedded support. So embedded support is going to look different on every campus.

Now, if a student tests that they need extreme remediation, that they won't be successful in a class with support, they are referred to something that we're referring to as an intensive readiness program that will be developed with the Board of Regents, the P-20 Council, and the faculty advisory committee.

And the reason the P-20 Council is in there is that we anticipate that the last section of the bill requires that parents be notified if their students aren't college ready. And we anticipate that high schools will respond to this and perhaps the P-20 Council will identify promising practices in high schools or in summer schools or in summer boot camp that can count as an intensive readiness program.

So neither the intensive readiness program or the embedded support is supposed to be one-size-fits-all. That's what we have right now oftentimes, in our remedial education.

So I see that my cochair is standing, so I will pause.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I appreciate some of the clarification. I think to further the discussion, through you, there are some that may be concerned that remedial education at the community college level and the state university system may go away as a result of this particular bill. So I think, through you, it would be good clarification to know exactly how much remediation would continue.

There was good clarification on embedded remediation that could actually be online courses and other services provided, not necessarily another teacher in the classroom following that student along, because that may be what some might feel as embedded alongside an individual, which of course would be a little bit more difficult to accomplish and certainly more expensive.

But, through you, Mr. President, could we ask the proponent to clarify if remedial programs would go away, or if not, to what degree would they continue to be conducted? And, again, there was clarification that it would be both at the community college level

and at the state university system.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Through you, Mr. President.

I think some of the confusion is around the language. The CSUs and the community colleges will continue to offer remedial support for students, but it won't be in the forum of offering a three credit class that meets maybe three days a week for an hour that charges students student loans and their Pell Grants and does not advance them towards degrees. The focus will be on providing support in a way that moves students toward degrees where they're paying for credits and they're getting credits.

Just one other quick point to my esteemed ranking member. If you know students that go to private colleges, even private colleges that are not, you know, high on the list of top colleges, they're all providing support in a remedial way because parents aren't going to pay for classes that aren't advancing their students towards degrees.

And what's happening now is students are taking these remedial classes, as we call them, the traditional remedial classes right now, and they're not getting credits towards degrees. And so that's why we need this shift, but remediation that is helping students will continue, the form will just change.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President, for those responses.

Just to clarify, I think I was under the impression

that there would still be the ability to take about one semester's worth, but not more of actual remedial courses.

Again, through you, Mr. President, for clarification.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Through you, Mr. President, in response to that part of the bill.

So there is a section of the bill that allows for one semester of remedial coursework where students can be charged for credits that are not advancing them toward a degree for special programs that are approved by the board of regents.

So for example, some professors at Capital talked about an innovative program they're doing at Capital for ELL students who need a lot of support. And this is doing it in an intensive way for one semester, so the most these students will be slowed down is one semester. And so again, it's about acceleration, but there is an exception if approved by the board of regents.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President.

That was very helpful. I do appreciate that response. There are of course tutoring classes that are provided in almost every institution that -- but again, those are for students that take advantage of them and seek them out.

And in fact, what this bill is really highlighting is a very profound problem we do have in the State of Connecticut that is most assuredly a K through 12

problem. Because if in fact remedial courses are being used more, there are more of them and there are more students requiring them, it points directly at the gap that we have at the K-12 system which I hope we will get to address, we hope, with some very strong reforms coming forward in an education bill from the Education Committee.

However this does address the continuing issue and the rise in the growth of remedial courses at our community college and state university system, which in fact does underscore the problem of cost and completion for many of our students that certainly can't afford to languish for even just a year, or two in some cases, in remedial courses. However it does speak to the fact that we also don't want students to fail if they're pushed too quickly forward without the foundation of a good educational system that allow them to succeed in college-level courses.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Than you, Senator.

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Mr. President, just in response to my ranking member.

A recent study, a teachers college that followed students who entered the remedial system found that a third of those students would have received a B or better without the remedial class. And so it is an indictment of our K to 12 system that two thirds of the students need that to pass, but I think it's an indictment of sort of the hardline that we draw in the sand to say, if you don't have the skill you can't advance to the next class.

And in Virginia they studied this and found that of students referred to remedial classes, a third never showed up. So you're losing a third of the students because they're discouraged. They go to college. They want to go to college.

So thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further on the bill?

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

You know, often times we get to learn a lot in this circle. I know we try to read bills before hand and if you're not on the Committee of Cognizance you haven't dealt with these issues. Many times we deal with issues year after year on the same committees. And so I want to thank Senator Bye and Senator Boucher for their comments because I've learned more than I had just by reading the bill.

And you know, I think this is one of those issues that if you just, you know, what I would call the, you know, average constituent test, walk into the Stop & Shop test and just tell people, you know, we have kids who are graduating from our high schools who are going to community colleges or state university colleges and they have to take remedial classes because they're deemed upon entry not to be ready for college.

We were talking about this in caucus and my first comment was, well you know, did we ever talk about what New York does with the board of regents exam upon exiting high school? Because you know, I know there's some issues with that, too, but maybe before they get to college we should be -- in determining they're not ready for college, we should be testing them before they get out of high school.

The second part which is shocking, which is nuance that I just realized and I thank Senator Bye for it, is that we're only using one measure to assess whether these young men and women are ready for college and that measure has no relationship to our curriculum in

high school. That's just absolutely ridiculous.

And so how much time and how much money have been spent by parents and students? And look, a lot of people at our community colleges are people who are older who, you know, are not right out of high school who are paying for this on their own with the money they've earned at a job. So it's just, you know, it would be great if there's a day where we don't need any of this. We get rid of the remedial classes and we get rid of the embeddedness.

With that though, Mr. President, I did have a couple of questions to see if I could help better understand this, to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Bye, you talked about intentionally leaving the term "embedded support" broad. I understand that. I do think that's the better course of action.

If I put my devil's advocate hat on, though, I would ask you, if you're in a first-year class at a state university and you are not a student who's deemed in need of embedded support, in that class is the embedded support for that student or students in any way going to hamper the professor's ability to go as fast as he or she needs to with the class? Is it going to somehow be a negative on those who don't need the support in terms of their growth in that subject matter?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Mr. President. I thank the Senator for his question and his comments.

It's a common question with this bill that is asked. And I have the great fortune of being married to a high school teacher. And what she tells me is that oftentimes kids get so hung up on the skills and they don't get into higher-level classes because they're in classes that focus on skills, such as remediation, but intellectually they're quite capable. They may have trouble writing an essay, but in class they have great ideas. They think differently.

And a lot of this push, so I can explain to the Senator, comes from a school district in one of the towns I represent where every student has open access to AP classes, that is there are no barriers. You could fail world history and try AP U.S. history in our district.

And this has changed the face of teachers' expectations of students and it's changed their classrooms, they would all say, for the better, and moved the schools much higher up on the rankings because more students are taking and trying AP classes and more students who would have been told you cannot take this class are going on to college, students who never would have.

So a lot of the things that I'm hearing from faculty and students and worries about watering down the classes are the exact same thing I heard when I was on the board of education in West Hartford and we moved to this model. And it has changed the face of teachers' expectations of students. Do teachers need to spend more time grading papers from students who are not prepared to write a research paper AP U.S.? Yes. That takes more time out of class and we believe the embedded supports will help with that.

But do more students have an opportunity in an intellectual environment to raise the bar and perform better? Yes. So I don't believe that this is going to water down the classes. I believe it's going to bring kids into those classes with -- who have great intellectual skills, but who are hurting on some of the academic skills.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

And as the father of a high school sophomore looking at next year's curricula, I actually think that's a great analogy. And I was not -- that's not our practice in Fairfield. I wasn't aware it was in West Hartford.

But I think your experience and that of your wife's is that if you challenge people, if you have high expectations you often will get more. If you have low expectations you often will have your expectations met.

And so I think that's an extraordinary message to send to young people in high school, in college, is that we expect a lot out of you because we know you can do it and we have help for you to help you do it. Now let's go to it, rather than telling people they can't do things. And I think that's a lesson that helps them life way more than it may even in the classroom.

My last question, Mr. President, if I could to the chairwoman of the committee, is you talk about -- excuse me -- high schools and higher education institutions aligning the curricula. Can you expand a little bit more on how that work through this? I know we have, you know, the common core state standards, but if you could just describe more of the alignment process.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Yes. Through you, Mr. President.

It's another really good question because this bill is really part of a package of what needs to happen in education of aligning curricula and it's part of a national movement that is having states adopt common core standards. And our colleges and universities are looking to those common core standards so that we know if a student graduates from high school this is what it means.

And what this bill does is it really, in terms of high expectations, it really sets a high bar and says, okay. We can have this intermediate step, but we need our public schools to get better. We need to be assessing kids in 8th and 10th grade so we have a heads up before they show up at a community college.

And as a nation and as a State we need to adopt standards. And if you study the common core state standards, you'll know that those assessments have no top. So that teachers -- it's not just about mastery, it's about how high can you go without a top.

And so what this bill says is we're going to be looking to the common course state standards and aligning college and high school in Connecticut and hopefully around the country, but this bill really puts us down as one of the first states to say, this is very important.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

And thank you, Mr. President.

And the impact on that then also would hopefully lead to a result where we have fewer and hopefully eventually no students who enter college unprepared because in part of that alignment. Is that a correct assumption?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Through you, Mr. President, yes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate the Senator's answering my questions.

And I think, you know, I started -- I read this bill after reading, I think it was an editorial or newspeople article about, I guess, some controversy or concern by some about this bill. When we had caucused it I first read it and someone described it as remedial classes in community colleges. And I said, well, that's what high school is for, was my first reaction before even reading the bill.

And my hope is that for those who -- maybe there are teachers in our colleges who are concerned, maybe administrators or others; my hope is they'll actually read the bill. They'll listen to your description and our discussion here in the circle. And if they're still opposed to it I would love to here the reasons why because there's simply no justification if we shouldn't have kids not prepared for college and they graduate from our high schools. But if we do, that we're sticking them in remedial classes as a part of the way towards graduation. That just doesn't make any sense.

That's not what college is for. That's not what their hard-earned dollars are going for and that's what not taxpayer dollars in the form of Pell grants and other money should be spent for.

So I rise in support of this and am glad that we're doing this bill today.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Boucher for the second time.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President, for the second time.

I just rise again to support this bill. There were very valid concerns that were brought forward that our Minority Leader touched upon briefly. And that is a concern that somehow this would water down the programs at our community college or state university system, that somehow there would be a greater level of failure possibly in this. But as was discussed here this could have so many more potentially upsides that would benefit students greatly.

And also it highlights a, not just a Connecticut problem, but as our chairman pointed out, it is a national problem as well. And it's so well worth the work going forward on this that if in fact it works very well it could become a model that can be used in other states.

Also it's an opportunity for us to try this and can revisit it as well if it needs changing and making even better in the future. So of course I support the bill and hope everyone in the circle will as well.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Than you, Senator.

Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Thank you very much.

Usually I wouldn't go after the leader of our caucus spoke, but his colloquy with Senator Bye raised some

things in my mind.

First of all, I really appreciate the hard work, Senator, that you had Ranking Member Boucher and others have put into this legislation.

In Enfield we are lucky enough to have Asnuntuck Community College and we're always touting our manufacturing program, but there's just a ton of folks going into community college from north-central Connecticut right out of high school in part because they need that lift to get them further along the road in higher education. But to be very honest, in part, because it's affordable. And if you go to the community college system for a couple of years and then you can transfer into a private university, sometimes that's the only way to actually make ends meet in north-central Connecticut.

But the other thing that sort of rose up in this conversation that I find is very exciting and I want to avail myself of this opportunity to share, is that just a couple of months ago I had an opportunity to meet with the superintendent of schools from Windsor Locks, Superintendent Sweeney.

And he brought to my attention that I believe Windsor Locks was the only school system in north-central Connecticut that was targeted for a grant about three years ago that was privately funded by some corporations. And what that grant was meant to do was to open up this notion, that I believe I heard from you, Senator Bye, about advanced placement coursework.

And Superintendent Sweeney said, the money is drying up now, but we need folks in the Legislature to pick up the gauntlet and run with this because it works. So the private sector said, let's try this, and they peppered it throughout the state of Connecticut and one of the towns they picked was Windsor Locks.

He showed me the statistics. Young people in the high school, Windsor Locks High School going into AP courses, female students going into AP courses and minority students going into courses. And then what they did is they created an expectation that you don't need to be necessarily college-bound, but if you have

an interest in a particular area and we have that AP course, you can get in. There are no barriers. And what he showed me was amazing, because over the last three years those numbers have skyrocketed.

First of all, there's sort of a mirror effect that the folks, the young people that would traditionally go into AP courses has expanded because the word in the school is that this is a good thing to do, but female students' numbers have escalated dramatically and African-American and Latino numbers have escalated dramatically.

He asked me this -- he posited this question because he was transferred from, I believe, Oregon just is the last couple of years. And he said, what is it that we do? I love this question when it comes to education. Senator McKinney has a sophomore. I have a sophomore, but I have a 2nd grader, too. You ask any 2nd grader, are you creative and do you like school? And he said the vast majority of those kids will say, yeah. I can do stuff and I like school.

And somehow between 2nd grade and a high school their thought process been changed around so that if you ask them, are you creative? Do you have that special skill set? Do you feel that you're extra special? That number has dramatically gone down.

So what is it about the traditional systems and constructs that we've set up that takes these wonderful young children who believe they can grow up to be president and do anything, and if you put a piece of paper in front of them they're not afraid to draw, and then all of a sudden they're worried about what peers are going to say and the outside world and things like that?

Superintendent Sweeney said, we've got to do whatever it takes to put the notion back in young people's heads that you can concur the world and don't worry about it if you're not perfect at everything. You don't have to be perfect at everything. You don't have to be a Rembrandt to pick up, you know, a brush and paint. And you don't have to be a straight-A student to excel at an AP course.

And when you do find that, hey, yeah. Maybe I have a hard time with this essay, but guess what? I can just get my arms around world history and it is not a problem. I understand how all this all works. That has just a fabulous effect.

So to the extent you guys are embarking on this path both to help the community college system and our high schools address this need, I just wanted to pass along a personal story. He was concerned that the town of Windsor Locks doesn't fall into the threshold of a needy school district or, I forgot the term of art, but a school district where you can avail yourselves of certain grants. But he wanted to make sure -- and I know that all my towns in north-central Connecticut, whether it's, you know, a Somers or a Suffield or an Enfield or a Windsor Lock or an East Granby or a Granby or a Windsor, any of those towns -- we need to be about the business of changing the overall constructs, infrastructure, outlook and expectations.

And please don't make it all pinned on the finances of a community because these changes in strategy work across the board. And you could have the most affluent town in the state of Connecticut and you're still going to have kids that feel that they just can't cut it and you need to flip that around.

And so thank you for moving forward with this. I think the more that we sort of peel back the pages here the more we're going to find that there's ample support to sort of turn the corner when it comes to education and expectations of our young people.

And I thank you and I'm happy to support this bill.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I really appreciate the discussion that we've had so

far on this bill. It seems to have really focused on a narrow population that community colleges serve, and that is a younger population leaving high school going into the community college. And it sounds like we're really focusing on a population that is, say, close to being ready but not quite ready.

So if I could, through you, Mr. President, to what extent does this bill impact, say, other populations, maybe those who are -- English as a second language, maybe those who are much advanced in years and have been away from school for a while, or even those that are going to community college, not necessarily for academics, but more along the technical side of things, such as becoming a dental hygienist or something like that, if through you, the proponent of the bill could elaborate on that.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Through you, Mr. President. I'm going to try to address those and please remind me if I have forgotten some of it.

So in terms of adults returning, we know that's a special population, which is why we're asking for a report in a year. But we do know, just like with younger students, the Accuplacer and the inability, no matter what your grades in high school, to try a credit-bearing class that's giving you credits toward a degree, is disallowed, is slowing progress of adult students.

And one of the things you hear often from people at community colleges is their lives are so full. They've got a child. They may be -- a car battery dies, you know. And this is community college, but maybe they're people who have affluence but had busy lives. That the more you slow down their progress toward degrees the less likely they are to achieve it. So we're trying to speed access.

Also give you an example of a technical program because my colleague Senator Kissel just mentioned it. And I had a talk with Frank Gulluni about this, because Frank runs the manufacturing program at Asnuntuck, which is almost all older students returning to school.

Somehow they get a pass. I don't know why his program -- they do not have to take the Accuplacer. And I asked him what his retention rate was for students. And many of his are displaced workers where he gets grants to bring displaced workers in their fifties back to community college. He has a 95 percent retention rate.

I said, Frank, how do you get 95 percent retention at a community college where we're running about 13 percent? And he explained that all the teaching is done in context, that they have their math books out when they're learning how to use a machine and where they're leaning how to make something, and that that makes it more relevant and in context. It's embedded, if you will. And he has a 95 percent job placement rate.

So he's holding onto students who are older and coming back to community colleges -- have to do other classes that require English and math and they're very successful. But I do -- I did make an exception for the older adults coming back that we would study that.

And as for the ELL, that is the particular population that we added the one semester of remedial support without credits moving you toward a degree, limiting the amount of time, but allowing up to four remedial classes for students that have English as a second language based on reports out of professors from Capital Community College.

And I know you asked more than those three questions. If I forgot something, feel free to remind me.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Actually I think you did. You hit them all and you did well.

If you could, though, just direct me to the line in the bill that talks about the older work -- the older population returning, would be, I guess exempted from this and there would be a study on that.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Through you, Mr. President.

It's sort of a complicated bill history, so I'm going to do my best. Because we adopted an amendment in the Senate and -- but we didn't pass it, so it wasn't put in the bill. And now we're adopting a new amendment today. But as part of that amendment I will, if you'll give me one minute, I will read you -- I'm sorry, I don't have the number, but I will read you the section.

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will come to order.

SENATOR BYE:

Okay. I am prepared, thanks to my hotshot assistant Kyle here.

Of the amendment LCO 3151, Senator Welch, lines 18 through 25. It's noted E, and it says, no later than the start of the fall semester 2014, the board of regents in consultation with the P-20 Council shall report in accordance with the provisions of Section 114(a) of the General Statutes to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly, blah, blah, blah, recommendations for a successful transition of adults returning to or first enrolling in higher education programs.

So that's meant for us to hear specifically about how they're doing coming up with programs, given the structures that we put on them to meet the needs of that particular part of the workforce.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you.

And I think this is my final question and I think I know the answer, but given the amendment history, if I could just ask to you.

And through you, Mr. President, as I understand it there's nothing in this bill that would prevent, say, even high school kids from still taking classes at community colleges like I know a lot of them do, but I just want to make sure that I'm clear on that.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Through you, Mr. President.

No. I'm hoping it would open up access because they may be allowed without needing to go through the one

test that's currently used.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

I have no further questions.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, madam -- Mr. President.

Serendipity is an amazing phenomenon. And as luck would have it on Monday I went to the local chamber of commerce annual meeting and was seated next to the president of our local community technical college, an individual whom I hold in the highest regard and whose opinion carries great weight with me.

I'm not on the Higher Education Committee and I haven't had an opportunity to learn a lot about this bill. And if there's anybody I hold in as high regard as the president of our committee technical college system, it's Senator Bye.

And I'm on my feet because I want to ask her some questions about how it might be that this important bill comes to us without the blessing of at least one individual who is leading with distinction and all of her heart one of our community technical colleges.

And I went online and looked at the testimony that was submitted when the Higher Education Committee had the public hearing on this bill and am seeing testimony from a very highly regarded professor of English at

the college, which is very strident in its opposition to this bill.

And so through you, Mr. President to Senator Bye, and I just want to -- I want to applaud Senator Bye because I don't think anyone gives more of herself to the consensus-making process than Senator Bye. Last year with our early childhood -- with our changes to the early childhood education landscape, Senator Bye endeared herself quite appropriately to people from throughout the state for the time that she invested in making sure that every voice was heard.

So that's a long introduction, but I wanted to set the tone of the conversation because I'm surprised that the people charged with implementing this policy haven't been brought to drink from the cup.

And so through you, Mr. President to Senator Bye, I'm sure she's aware of that phenomenon and I'd be curious to get her take on why she was not able, or the committee was not able -- this is not a personal thing, this is a process -- but why the process has ended up at a place where people in the system feel uncomfortable?

Through you, Mr. President, to Senator bye.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Through you, Mr. President.

I really appreciate the opportunity, Senator Roraback and I thank you for your kind comments. And I agree with your opinion of the president of your community college. I think we have great leaders in this state, of our community college system.

When you're working on a bill of this magnitude and it is really a sea of change, you talk to as many people as you can. We relied on a community college president who's representing the community college presidents as their leader at the board of regents who

is David Levinson, who changed the bill significantly.

The initial bill simply said, if you'd like to try an entry-level class and you're accepted into college you can try it. And that led to great outroar and worries about, what about the supports and will they be in place? Because we wanted to get the conversation started knowing there was this problem.

So we've relied on his guidance and have talked to multiple college presidents. I've talked to my college president from Farmington, from Tunxis, Cathryne Adddy who I also hold in great regard. And I know she's concerned about the bill as well. I think sometimes when you're a legislator you need to listen to as many people as you can and then when, especially when it comes to making a significant change you need to listen to the data, the national data, the state data, listen to many experts and come down on what you think is the best.

Institutions of higher education resist change strongly. I worked on a campus for many years and I don't think we'd be standing here with this entrenched problem if change happened easily on campuses. That said, it's because they care deeply about their students. I mean, so --

And then to the faculty. You know, there's some faculty who are very unhappy with me and I've engaged in many conversations with them online, in person. You've probably been CCed on some of them, but we have worked closely with the faculty union who's had the facts of the bill and has been going on a listening tour to try to explain it because, like with education reform, this has taken on a life of its own. And there's this sense that we're just going to -- yes -- that we're just going to somehow drop these students to the side of the road if they can't pass the Accuplacer, and nothing could be further from the truth. We're trying to embed support throughout multiple years.

If I was a college president in Connecticut I would be worried about the resources, because we've identified about $9 million in resources that can be saved because we're spending a lot of money helping

students. But our community colleges have faced 10 percent here, 10 percent there. So say, well, yeah. There's money, but what if we get another rescission?

So I'm sure she's concerned about resources as well. So you know, I can understand her concern and I think it comes from a good place, but if you spent as much time as Senator Boucher and I did and went to the national data on this, you'd see we have a system in Connecticut that's working for about 13.8 percent of our students, but it's not working for everyone.

And in community colleges like New York City and Maryland, changing the model and moving to embedded support has doubled the graduation rates. And so we understand change is hard and there are good people who are very smart who can -- will disagree, but I have faith in giving the two and half years in our college presidents in our board of regents to form policies that are going to help students be more successful than they're being now. Long answer.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

A long answer to a long question, Mr. President. And that -- and it was a very thorough and complete answer. And what I'd like to know from Senator Bye is the provenance of this bill. I don't know if the bill originated as the idea of a smart person or whether it was the cause of a committed legislator. Those can -- those two things are not mutually exclusive.

But through you, Mr. President to Senator Bye, is this our -- have we been swinging away at this one for a number of years and we finally have teed it up? Just by way of background, how does this bill come to us and why?

Through you, Mr. President to Senator Bye.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you. Thank you for the question.

Through you, Mr. President, I have to give a lot of credit to my cochair and Ranking Member Boucher and others who've been on the Higher Education much longer -- Committee -- much longer than I have, as well as Representative LeGeyt who was quite shocked to learn all he learned and said this was one of his biggest issues.

For me it was serendipity as well, just like you talk about serendipity, Senator Roraback. The Connecticut Association for Human Services which works to advance folks who have challenges, economic challenges, published a report several years ago and Liz Dupont-Diehl convened a working committee that brought in everyone at the beginning of the session -- were actually in our Senate room.

And in that meeting is when I heard this thing. I asked the professor, but what if someone got an A in high school calculus, could they try? Could they try an entry-level math class? And the answer was unequivocally no. Something in me snapped at that moment thinking, you can't even try. And it snapped because I'm married to a teacher who spends her life making sure that her AP class is open to as many people students as want to take it, and who has seen it change lives.

So she said to me when I went home, she said, you mean I have to let any 15-year-old who wants to try a college class, but the college-aged kids can't try a college class unless they get through some gate? We spend 10 years breaking down barriers and gates in the high school and we still have these gates in the community college? And it was just a moment.

And then fueled by -- I've then am part of a Connecticut team with the National Governors Association, and I went to a conference for a group called Complete College, which is funded by the Lumina

Foundation. All of these things came together when you see the national landscape and the national picture, to say we have an opportunity here in Connecticut in 2012, a bill that started as a shall, saying anyone can try. The board of regents came forward and said, we think we can give you language to proved safeguards and put Connecticut on the map as a real leader in this area.

So it was many things coming together, but I have to tell you it's the voice of my wife and of Tom Moore at Conard saying, I -- when they told me anyone could take my AP Euro class I thought, how can this be? And now he's the biggest proponent of open access of AP. So I think it's just a long-term idea that sometimes kids need to struggle to be successful and opening up access to real college classes with intellectual discussions will help students be successful.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And that concludes my questions. And what's clear to me is that Senator Bye and Senator Boucher and all the people that have worked so hard on this bill have a vision which is laudable and deserving of everyone's attention. And when Senator Bye said, our job is to listen to everybody, that's absolutely our job.

But I've learned in my years here that while I try to listen to everybody, I listen particularly hard to people that are on the ground every day giving their lives to the mission of higher education. And so when I -- if I hadn't sat for an hour at lunch with the president of our community college on Monday I probably wouldn't be on my feet. But because I place such a high value on her considered opinion and because she is at a place where she thinks this is best for the students that she serves, I can't in good conscience support the bill.

So I will vote no on the bill in the hopes that the next time I see my community college president she will say, you know what? I wish the bill hadn't passed, but we're going to give it our -- I'm assuming the bill is going to pass because it's a rare day when a bill is called in the State Senate and it doesn't pass.

But I'm hoping that she -- I know that she will commit herself to serving her students no matter what happens with this bill, but I hope that in the fullness of time maybe she'll say, my reservations were not as well-founded as I thought they were and we're going to make this program work for the students that we serve.

So I appreciate the Chamber's time. I appreciate Senator Bye's responses. And I, for one, will hope that should the bill pass it does in the fullness of time benefit people entering our community colleges who need a helping hand to get to the finish line.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, senator.

Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO:

Dropped my glasses.

I rise to support the bill and to thank Senator Bye for her efforts on this. The first day we sat here and Senators together she was talking about this bill. And she has followed through.

This is the bill that should have passed 20 years ago. Twenty years ago. And this is a bill that really deserved the support of everyone here. And the reason I say that, first of all, I spent 28 years teaching in the community college system. I'm a graduate of Manchester Community College and many of the questions that are raised here during this whole process for the last month as this bill has floated forward I've

experienced and felt and seen sometimes with the light and sometimes with real disappointment.

Manchester Community College today has the equivalent of 24 professors just teaching remedial courses. Twenty-four. A remedial course, if I sign up for remedial reading or math or any of those courses I am going to get two classes a week, one and a half hours, three hours a week. Three hours a week.

At the same time, many of us in this Chamber are supporting full-day preschool programs. Four year olds are going to have full-day kindergarten and they're going to learn for six to eight hours a day, but we're talking about remedial programs six hours a week or four hours a week or three hours a week, three hours basically for a course.

Let's talk about signing up for a course. I come in and I take a test and they tell me I need remedial English or remedial writing or remedial math. If I am lucky I might get into those three sections, because as we've heard, sometime 60 to 70 percent of our students need remedial courses. Don't forget the number is not the same, but it is exceptionally high at UConn as well and at the four state universities.

It is a statewide, it is a national problem because we are not prepared for college period. And that's why the preponderance of all of these courses. But the worst part is I get my three remedial courses and I've got to take a forth course because I'm getting a scholarship. And I have to take four courses if I'm going to get a Perkins loan or grant.

So what do I sign up for? Sociology, history, all courses required to (inaudible) psychology. Everybody wants psychology. Depending if those are filled, they might be in an introductory math course, even though they were trying to get through a remedial course. It's not a good system. It's a system where we collect the money for the fees, the students take their courses and off they go. It is not a system.

The system also is impacted because we're talking two types of students -- and this was addressed I think by questions earlier -- we have students who have higher

education degrees, master's degrees coming from other countries who are extremely bright but can't speak English. And I have had them in my classroom. They cannot speak English.

And then we have students that have come through our system, many have dropped out. We heard earlier about some of the programs that are very successful at high schools where any course is open to anyone. You know, when you get past the sophomore year you can do that, because everybody dropped out that's going to drop out in the freshman year in sophomore year. Right?

But some of those students come back ten years later because something has happened in their life. They decided in order for me to get a real job I've got to go to a community college. And so the age difference, the variety of students, the variety of needs is fantastic here.

What I like is the bill as make changes, the committee has made changes. I spoke with students today, students from Manchester who do not support the bill. And maybe, like the college president, what they might not support is what they saw originally and that's a problem we always have in this body, because what comes out originally as -- as a bill usually is massaged and made much better over time, and this is one of those bills.

It is a much better bill because it has different approaches to remediation. It allows intense remediation and so on, so students, in fact, can prepare for courses. So the changes in this bill make it acceptable. The changes in this bill I think would satisfy most students that's going to find out we're not taking away remedial efforts to help students. We're changing the way we do that.

We're changing it from three hours a week in reading to something hopefully far more intense so that in a six-month period they're going to be able to take those college courses instead of a two-year period, and that's the other tragedy. You can take a combination of regular courses and remedial courses and use up all your Perkins grants and now you're eligible really to take some more courses, but there's

no money left. You've used them up on remedial courses, most of those for no credit.

This bill addresses many of those concerns. It's a very progressive step, but some of the things I'm talking about here I hope we keep in mind when we do evaluations, because it's not just students, it's a variety of students with a variety of needs and in the evaluation process that all has to be looked at.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I just want to close by thanking some folks who've worked very hard on this bill. I want to start by thanking my ranking member. We spent a lot of time in our committee on this and on getting it right. And I think she's read about 17 amendments every time very patiently and always with input that makes it better.

I also want to thank my cochair, Representative Willis and Ranking Member LeGeyt and our newest member Representative Ackert who both took a lot of time on this issue.

I also want to thank the members of the circle. I know it's been a long debate and I want to thank you for your open mindedness. And the passion of my colleague, Senator Cassano is wonderful and you can see he has worked in a community colleges. He knows the entrenched issues and believes we need to make a change.

13.28 percent graduating when they referred to remedial education with a certificate or degree is not

enough. I know not everyone is going to graduate from our community colleges and -- or our CSUs and they get important experiences while they're there, but if you ask the students when they started community college or at CSU, what are you going for? They're not going to say, well, so I can get a couple classes; owe a bit of money.

They're going because they want to get a degree. And there's no state in the nation where a degree has more value and not having a degree is a detriment, more -- and now I've got to -- I mixed my verbs here, but -- where -- then Connecticut, a degree is very important in Connecticut. A certificate is very important in Connecticut if you want to get out of poverty.

And we know a lot of these educational issues are about entrenched property. And no group has been more impacted with this current system than minority students and low-income students. They're more likely to be referred to remediation. They're less likely to get out of remediation.

And so this bill I believe is about a promise to our students to do all we can to help them get to that degree as fast as possible because we know their lives are complicated and we know the degree is important and we're going to provide supports in many ways to try to help you get there starting in our K to 12 system and linking with our K to 12 system.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, speaking in support of the bill as amended, I wanted to begin by commending Senator Bye for her extraordinary work on this, in a difficult and controversial subject to shepherd it through the

process to gain a consensus to -- to hear all sides and to shape the bill in a way that is so positive and significant.

I also wanted to commend Ranking Member Senator Boucher and Representative Willis, the House chair, because I believe, Mr. President, that this may turn out to be one of the most important bills of this session overall. Because this is dealing with a critical issue and that is we just cannot stay with the status quo as it is in terms of how we deal with remedial education at the community college level in particular.

It is not -- the whole purpose of remedial education is -- the presumption is that those who successfully negotiate the remedial courses will then be leveraged into completing college credit courses and will then get a degree or a certificate. The problem in practice is, as Senator Bye has pointed out so well, too often that is not the case.

In fact, the overwhelming majority of cases that is not the case. That students lose progress toward a degree. They fall by the wayside. They lose momentum. And in some cases they wind up being financially worse off because they have taken out student loans to enroll in school and perhaps forfeited employment for a degree that they don't have, and now loans that they do have to repay. So in some ways, their -- their situation is economically worse after starting but failing to -- to make significant progress.

So what we are saying here is that the new approach about having intensive remediation early on, which is going to be critical -- because we have seen in the past that a well run, intensive remediation program for well-motivated students and in a well-taught program can make up for years of deficiency in a fairly short period of time.

As Senator Cassano has said, you have an -- an intensive focus on remediation in a short period of time in an intensive course, followed by a well-run embedded program, will allow students to be on track to get college credit much sooner.

Now, I know that there have been -- there has been some controversy, because I know there have been some community college faculty who have said that some of the students coming into community colleges are so much in need of remedial help, that unless they are allowed to take this separate track of remedial courses for a period of time, sometimes up to a couple of years, that they won't be at the level where they can take college credit courses.

But the reality is that spending that much time in remedial courses ultimately defeats the purpose of being in college in the first place and the opportunity to ever successfully complete a degree, which is why they went to college in the first place.

So what we are dealing with here is a -- is a new mode of approach to remediation and it is necessary that we do this, that we try this. And as Senator Bye has -- has well-structured the bill, it goes into effect in 2014, it is because the status quo just is not working and cannot just continue.

So I think that what Senator Bye has done with this bill, as I said at the beginning, it may be one of the most important initiatives of the entire session, and urge support of the bill.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Clerk, please announce the (inaudible) of a roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch. Senator Kane.

Have all members voted? Have all members voted? If all members have voted please check the board to make sure your vote is accurately recorded. If all members have voted the machine will be closed at the Clerk will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill Number 40.

Total Number voting	36
Necessary for passage	19
Those voting Yea	33
Those voting Nay	3
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The bill as amended passes.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 34, Calendar 177, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 225, AN ACT AUTHORIZING AN UPDATED ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY STUDY, favorable report of the committee on appropriations, and there's an amendment.

THE CHAIR:

I think it is.

Senator Looney.

THE CLERK:

Wait. Wrong one.

THE CHAIR:

I'm sorry. Mr. Clerk, remove that please.

THE CLERK:

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the appointing authority, or this Committee or the General Assembly in approving your nomination?

MERLE W. HARRIS: I hope not and the answer is no.

SENATOR LOONEY: No; well thank you very much and again congratulations and thank you --

MERLE W. HARRIS: Thank you.

SENATOR LOONEY: -- for your willingness to continue serving the state in this capacity.

MERLE W. HARRIS: Thank you.

SENATOR LOONEY: Thank you.

Next is Naomi Cohen of Bloomfield also to be a member of the Board of Regents for Higher Education.

Welcome, Representative Cohen, how are you?

HJ66

NAOMI K. COHEN: Thank you very much, Senator Looney, Representative Piscopo.

SENATOR LOONEY: Do you swear to tell the truth here today and that all of the answers you give shall be truthful so help you God?

NAOMI K. COHEN: I do, I do.

SENATOR LOONEY: Very good. Could you give us a statement and then we can follow up with any questions we might have.

NAOMI K. COHEN: Yes thank you very much. I am Naomi Cohen. I live in Bloomfield and I'm very honored and very excited by Governor Malloy's nomination to be a member of the

college continue to escalate beyond the pale. And I think one of the things in driving the remediation issue was the notion that students were using their financial aid to take these remedial courses.

And by the time they got to the courses they needed to apply to their majors that they'd used up all their aid. And that creates a drop-out program in and of itself. It's like the state's drop-out program.

So I think that we need definitely to think about remediation in a different way. I've look at Senate Bill 40 which talks about the remediation issues. I think the -- the trick will be in the details of how we define what it means to be substantially ready and able to have one's remediation through an enrichment in a quote/unquote regular course versus those students who are substantially in need of remediation and will need to do some pre-remediation courses.

The other obviously issue of concern will be how those courses will be run, how they will be paid for if there's going to be no cost to the students to take for instance the proposal that talks about doing intensive summer courses.

One of the -- the beauties of the merger was in the membership of the Board by including the four commissioners as ex-officio members of our Board. So Commissioner Pryor is sitting with us as is Commissioner Marshall from Labor and Commissioner Smith from Economic Development and Commissioner Mullen also sits with us.

So we have a -- we have the opportunity

amongst and between our colleagues to figure out how we translate those remedial needs down to the high school and talking to students about what it really takes to go to college long before they're -- they're in their senior year and finding out that they're not able to do the work.

I had a very interesting experience. I was at a program at Middlesex Community College and they had two student speakers and one of the students was a young man who had grown up in Middletown and thought that what he really wanted to do was to go to Wesleyan. And he was very insulted, as he described it, when Wesleyan did not accept him.

And so to get his mad out he enrolled at Middlesex and he said he was there in his first semester when it became very clear to him that the reason that he was not accepted at Wesleyan was because he had terrible grades and he was a terrible student. And he had maximized his two years at Middlesex and is now a student with scholarship aid at Wesleyan as a junior.

And I think that that's what we want for our students to be able to really get rich educations in the community colleges and be able to transfer them.

SENATOR LOONEY: That's a -- that's a very good point I think that story about somebody who probably was not willing to admit his -- his lack of preparation initially and then discovered it as he went along and -- and remediated it and then was, in fact, able to go where he had hoped to go all along.

That then raises the question do you think in

terms of now that we have a -- a single Board of Regents governing the CSU system and the community colleges, should we -- if somebody is -- is hoping to go to a -- to Western or Central or Eastern or Southern and is in substantial need of remediation, should they be, in fact, directed to a community college instead -- that they -- that by definition needing remedial coll -- classes means you are not, in fact, college ready and that -- that they shouldn't be in the CSU system to begin with and that they should be taking remedial courses at the -- at a community college and then -- then transferring?

Just -- just your thoughts on that because I was, as -- as I mentioned to Merle Harris, I was rather shocked when I saw the -- the number of students who need remedial courses in the CSU system, not surprising that large numbers in the community college do, but the fact that it was a fairly high number in the CSU system seemed to me a -- a real problem and a -- a source of alarm because you would think that, by definition, that problem should have been resolved before they got there.

NAOMI K. COHEN: And I would like to think in this new structure and with the collaborative partnerships that we have established and will continue to establish that college readiness begins in the public elementary and secondary schools.

I do think students need to know more about what is really expected. I can tell you that at the community colleges the courses are difficult. They're rich in -- in curricular materials and I would not like to see the community colleges be thought of as the public tutors for the -- the four year universities.

The community colleges -- 90 something percent of their students are Connecticut residents and so I would like the community colleges, through this transfer agreement that we've passed and will have to work on the details, to become partners in -- in educating Connecticut's population and keeping them in Connecticut.

SENATOR LOONEY: But just in terms of talking about the -- the cost and financial obligations, obviously it is less expensive if you are going to be taking remedial colleges -- classes to take them at the community college level rather than trying to take them at the CSU level where you're -- where you're paying higher tuition and perhaps room and board as well --

NAOMI K. COHEN: Absolutely.

SENATOR LOONEY: -- if you're a residential student. Right, right, good, well thank you very much and I think it's a -- it's a great benefit to the state to have you willing to -- to bring your vast experience to this position.

NAOMI K. COHEN: Thank you very much.

SENATOR LOONEY: Representative Piscopo.

REP. PISCOPO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon.

NAOMI K. COHEN: Good afternoon.

REP. PISCOPO: I -- I think when -- we served together for awhile in the -- in the House and -- and one the things I've always been

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DAVID LEVINSON: Thank you. Well, good morning. Good morning, Senator Bye and Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

For the record, I'm David Levinson, interim vice president for the Community Colleges under the Board of Regents and president of Norwalk Community College.

I'm here today to speak on behalf of the 17 institutions that comprise the Connecticut state colleges and universities, ConnSCU, system. And I want to thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 5028, An Act Concerning the Alignment of Common Core State Standards with College Curriculum; House Bill 5029, An Act Concerning College Readiness Assessments; and Senate Bill 40, An Act Concerning Open Access to College Level Courses.

First let me begin commenting on Senate Bill 40. The Board of Regents is quite concerned at the results of the remediation programs, as you all have expressed this morning. They do not appear to lead to higher rates of degree attainment for the citizens accepts of Connecticut.

The dilemma of remediation is that certainly too many students need it and too few succeed when they get it. Among community college students, about seven out of ten entering students take at least one remedial course upon entering. While in proportion has been trending downwards for full-time students, going from 74 percent to 70 percent in 2011, it has increased for those entering as part-time students from 63

percent to 71 percent over the same period of time.

And I would add that if you look at community college enrollments, what you see is a trend line towards more part-time enrollment than full time.

Remediation is less widespread at the Connecticut State University campuses, but still about one our of five first-time full-time students at these four campuses enroll in at least one remedial course in their first semester.

These remedial enrollment rates have dropped slightly from 23 percent in the fall of 2009 to 18 percent in the fall of 2011.

Unsurprisingly, success rates for students who are identified for remedial coursework are lower than those who aren't. Among first-time full-time community college students seeking an associate's degree who do not need remediation, the three-year graduation rate was 19.1 percent for those entering the fall 2004 or just out of one of five who do not need remediation.

This level of success clearly should be improved, but it stands in stark contrast to students who need any remediation for whom the three-year graduation rate was 7.8 percent, which translated into a completion rate or a completion for just one out of every 13 entering students.

For students who place in the lower levels of remedial mathematics, the success rate dropped below five percent or one in twenty. Although if these students are given another

year to graduate, this figure improves to about one of ten finishing a degree within three years.

Among the Connecticut state universities, these gaps are smaller, with a six-year graduation rate of 47.8 percent for full-time first-time students entering in the fall of 2004 who did not take remedial courses upon entry, compared to those who did take remedial courses for whom the six-year graduation rate was five and a half percent points lower to -- at 42.1 percent.

To place these numbers in a context, however, it's important to recognize that all of the national research about graduation rates point to the primacy of students' academic inputs as the primary determinant of their college success.

A recent study by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California Los Angeles, found that the six-year graduation of students with high school grades in the A or A+ range was 79.3 percent. And this does not count those who transferred or graduated somewhere else.

The graduation rates for students with a B+ plus high school average, however, was just 59.8 percent. It was 48.7 percent for a B average, 36.6 percent for a B- average and 27.7 percent for students with a C+ average.

So clearly there is a relationship between the GPA upon admittance and the likelihood that they're going to succeed.

We agree that we have to fix the broken approaches to remediation. We also agree

with a lot of the sentiments expressed here, that we should try to mainstream as many students as possible into college-level courses by providing corequisites or course-embedded support for those needing extra help. And I'll give you some examples of what's going on in a few moments.

But we also must face the reality that we receive at our doorsteps each fall many students who are way more than a little behind for whom extra support in a regular course would not work out at all.

And again, what we're seeing -- and the Committee certainly has commented on this -- is the issue of students who are coming to us with increasingly significant remedial needs that need to be taken care of.

For those students who do come to us and do need help in terms of developmental support, we have evidence that intensive instruction does work quite well, and we know that the model of a series three credit-equivalent courses, or even larger number of credits, does not work very well.

But again, an intensive or perhaps a summer approach might be something we would like to explore further.

We also know that, you know, this disconnection that exists amongst the courses that students take is also very problematic. And as I will mention in a moment, we have done some work to try to remedy that.

We agree wholeheartedly with the Complete College America call that we answer the

fundamental question about remediation, is what -- which is is what's being taught in developmental education what students really need to succeed?

It is time to revisit both the structuring goals of remediation so that a coherent approach leading towards graduation becomes the norm. And we agree that tying a student's future success to results on a placement exam in and of itself is not serving students very well at all.

So as a sidebar, I would add that one of the things that we need to look at are different modes of assessment before students are coming to study with us to really ascertain what are the learning challenges they have and how can we customize a curriculum that would address those challenges?

And in fact, there are many initiatives that are going on at the Connecticut state colleges and university institutions. Western University's Bridge program, which President Schmotter will talk about this morning, as well as other innovative summer programs across our campuses, have been effective.

But we are concerned with the approach of SB 40 in that it takes away the ability of an institution to require students through remediation before taking college-level courses.

And unfortunately, we're concerned that maybe a kind of Darwinian result where students fail at the introductory level in large numbers rather than receive the instruction they need to be prepared for

college.

One of the things that I think we can benefit from in the coming year are the insights that have been gained by two of our community colleges, Housatonic Community College, and, putting on my other hat, my college, Norwalk Community College, because both have been part and we're both entering the last of a three-year program called the Development Education Initiative that has been funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

And also very important with that program is a state policy component in looking at what we can do in the State of Connecticut to increase students' success rates. And in fact, I just attended a meeting last week in Seattle that was convened of the seven states involved in this initiative.

But what I'd like to talk about for a few moments is some of the work that has gone on at Housatonic Community College and also at my institution, because I think those represent some of the promising practices that we'd like to engage in in order to address the issue of remedial learning.

Since becoming an Achieving the Dream College in 2004, Housatonic Community College has focused on increasing the success rates of students taking developmental math with the ultimate goal of students taking and completing college-level mathematics instruction.

HCC, Housatonic, has developed self-paced developmental math courses. Students progress at their own pace with mastery of

all course content required in order to progress in the course and ultimately to pass the course.

Self-paced math permits student to accelerate their completion of developmental math. This has resulted in some students completing all remediation in one semester; however, others take more than one semester to complete one remedial course.

The motivation and initiative of the student really affects the student's individual outcomes. Providing the opportunity for acceleration of completion of developmental courses is stressed based upon a national research model that the Achieving the Dream Initiative and the Bill and Melinda Gates Developmental Education Initiative has completed, and also was the topic of the state policy meetings that I was at in Seattle last week.

So self-paced remedial instruction, to do it in a more modular way, not to be wedded to the three- or six-credit model is something that we believe can and has been very effective.

My institution, Norwalk Community College, which has also been part of the three-year Bill and Melinda Gates Initiative, we've been successful in reducing the students' time in which she or he is solely involved in remediation.

By enrolling students in learning communities that are comprised of cohorts of students engaged in a block-scheduled combination of developmental and college-level courses.

Last fall I was actually a participant observer in such a model where I taught a college-level freshman seminar course that was cojoined to a college-level technology literacy class and a developmental English course. And what we did in this learning community was the three faculty members, myself included, had a common syllabi where -- in one another's classes and showed great consistency to the 18 students that were enrolled.

And what emerged from that was a very powerful cohort model where the students provided tremendous support to one another. And if one of the seven -- 18 were missing, they would get on the case of that student and call him or her and make sure they showed up next time, so it was a really great peer influence.

And learning communities as a promising practice is something that was underscored in the Connecticut Association for Human Services report, Developmental Education at Connecticut Community Colleges: A Key to Economic Recovery, and also this and some other initiatives were part of a report issue by MDRC entitled Unlocking the Gates: What We Know About Improving Developmental Education.

And that report talks about different developmental ed. practices and what has worked and what haven't. And I'm happy to provide copies of those reports to the Committee.

So in sum, in terms of SB 40, ideally we would appreciate the opportunity to take

full advantage of our new consolidation and look across all 17 ConnSCU campuses to assess best practices, to see what's working and what's not, as we were work to address this very important issue in a more holistic way.

Of course we would also be happy to report back our progress to you in a year and discuss a legislative approach at that point, if necessary.

Thank you.

REP. WILLIS: Did you want questions on this and then we'll --

DAVID LEVINSON: What works best for the Committee? I could go on with the others. Whatever is best for you.

REP. WILLIS: I think it best we stop on this particular one, and then we'll move on to your --

Questions? Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE: Good morning, and thank you for your --

DAVID LEVINSON: Good morning, thank you.

SENATOR BYE: -- testimony.

I just want to make sure that I'm understanding your data correctly. So what you're saying is that for first-time full-time students at the community college, the three-year graduation rate is 9.1 percent if they need no remediation.

That was the -- in the fourth paragraph --

DAVID LEVINSON: Actually, it it was 19.1 percent.

SENATOR BYE: 19.1 percent.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. 19.1 percent.

But if they need remediation, 92 percent do not graduate in three years or with a two-year degree?

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

SENATOR BYE: So we're clear, so people understand.

DAVID LEVINSON: That's correct.

SENATOR BYE: And 83 percent, according to the data that I also have that you provided, 83 percent of the students who need remediation are not graduation in six years, if I --

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes, let me --

SENATOR BYE: Look the last -- it says 17 -- 17.5 percent if they took any remedial classes.

DAVID LEVINSON: And, I'm sorry, the addendum, the tables that were provided or --

SENATOR BYE: Well, I have some, and I believe it's also in your tables. In your --

DAVID LEVINSON: Okay.

SENATOR BYE: Let me -- I'll show you.

DAVID LEVINSON: I'm not sure I'm looking at the

same --

SENATOR BYE: Yes. So if you go to -- do you see where the handout that says remedial coursework participation?

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: Completion rates?

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: Down at the bottom, you were citing the three-year graduation rates as 7.7 percent there.

DAVID LEVINSON: Okay.

SENATOR BYE: And if you take that out to six years, where it says 17.5.

DAVID LEVINSON: Okay.

SENATOR BYE: Graduate in six years?

DAVID LEVINSON: Right. That's correct.

SENATOR BYE: So that's like three times as long. But we understand a lot of students are part-time.

DAVID LEVINSON: Right, right.

SENATOR BYE: And you're observing the population.

DAVID LEVINSON: Exactly.

SENATOR BYE: And also, I mean, the national data shows that full-time students are much more likely to progress to graduation.

DAVID LEVINSON: Hopefully.

SENATOR BYE: So you're also already starting with --

DAVID LEVINSON: Right. No.

And just to give an example, at my institution this semester, 71 percent of our students are part time. And again, the trend line -- and so this exacerbates the problem.

SENATOR BYE: Right. Okay. So I want to sort of tell you where this title comes from --

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

SENATOR BYE: -- and what the idea is.

So in my town, in our public high schools, we offer college-level classes.

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

SENATOR BYE: They're called AP US, AP English. And we have a policy. That is any student who wants to try, student who failed world history, and they can try AP US.

Now, can you imagine when this was introduced, there were a lot of teachers who said, How can I take any student in my AP class? How can we possibly do this?

And there was a sentiment in town that there were students who were AP material and students who were not AP material. And ten to twelve years later, this has been an incredibly successful program.

We now offer more AP classes. In fact, they made it that if the student didn't want to take AP and were recommended -- was recommended for AP, they had to go see the principal.

DAVID LEVINSON: Uh-huh.

SENATOR BYE: So the idea is we're going to have high expectations for all, and the district now, you know, has some of the highest pass rates for AP. It's open access. Anyone can try. So that's where this is coming from.

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

SENATOR BYE: And I hear your plea, you know, let us decide who has to take remediation and who doesn't. But my -- as I'm looking at this data, all the remediation we're doing right now is not leading to college graduation or college success.

And maybe, you know, maybe three percent aren't making it now. And if you say, well, if we allow open access, we can have a Darwinian effect.

I would argue that right now, looking at the data, it's pretty Darwinian.

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

SENATOR BYE: Kids are -- but we're spending money -- actually, the next question for you is another question.

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

SENATOR BYE: But by my understanding, we're not losing money. The students are losing their

own money paying for remedial classes because they're covering the costs themselves, getting loans and Pell Grants and using that up.

So I guess my question to you is, given the success of the current system, why not just let students who want to try, try?

Because -- you know, so look at -- we're offering college classes in high school --

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

SENATOR BYE: -- and saying anyone can try it. I don't -- I'm trying to understand how our community colleges could offer college-level classes and then say, no, you can't try.

So I guess that's --

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure, I mean --

SENATOR BYE: It's not an easy question to --

DAVID LEVINSON: No, no, no.

SENATOR BYE: It gives you my thinking.

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure. No, I appreciate that. And certainly, you know, there is -- you know, what you're saying, which certainly, you know, makes good sense, that on some level, you know, what could be operating as a self-fulfilling prophecy, if we have low expectations for our students, they will perform that way.

And I think the example you give in terms of high school AP classes is such that if you're having a different expectation even for students who may not present themselves

as, quote, AP-prepared, that they can rise to the occasion.

No, I think you raise a very important point.
I guess the way I would respond is that we're getting -- most of our students, or at least my experience of our students, is, you know, many are having, you know, have come with challenged academic histories.

And when I look at our students, and mine at NCC, just as an example, what I see are students who I think have ability but, you know, have very low self-esteem. I'm not a psychologist, but my analysis, low self-esteem; that they -- they have have unfortunately -- or they have internalized a message of failure, that they have not gone the traditional route, they have stopped out, whatever it be. Again, it's quite diverse.

I guess my concern there is if we didn't have a system that would try to assess their ability to remediate prior to that, that a subsequent failure could be really devastating.

And again, you know, the point you're raising is however, they're not succeeding even in the face of -- we're trying. So what -- point very well taken.

But my -- my thought in terms of how to address that would be that I would, you know, first of all try to take remediation out of, you know, the normal course load that a student enters in the first or second year, meaning that there are initiatives -- and I think of the City University of New

York has what's called the Start Program, and I think you've had a presentation with folks.

And that program, to me, has been -- is very exciting, because it's essentially, you know, to simplify it, it's a model program where there's intensive summer instruction or summer catch-up work. The student is -- is charged a rather minimal fee and is able to bring his or her skills up to par so that they don't need the kind of remediation that many of our incoming students require.

And this is a practice that I would, you know, I would like for us -- and certainly in the community colleges, and I think all 17 institutions -- to look at, because the data that I'm familiar with has been very effective.

What I have not been able to wrap my arms around, quite honestly, is the cost structure of that. However, quite candidly, if you look at the cost structure of what we're doing, it's not cheap. So that's one thing.

The second thing that I would like to do -- and we've been speaking about it before -- is to provide assessments of all high school students in their 11th grade -- when they're in 11th grade.

Now, we do have the CAPT exam, which, you know, as I understand is given after 10th grade, and there are some studies -- I know -- Nellie Mae did a study that showed that it was an effective tool for assessing college readiness, and I'd like to look at that again.

But also, the idea of doing some more rigorous statewide assessments in the 11th grade so that students also have a chance to catch up. Related to that is also the lack of a required 12th grade mathematics, because that is also hindering student progress.

So I guess my -- you know, my thinking of the situation is if we can push down the remediation before they get to the college, to do some more intensive work and to look at different assessments, because my concern is when we're putting everyone through, for example, Accuplacer or for that matter any -- any one instrument, there are things that you're measuring and things that you're not, and I don't necessarily believe we're getting a true composite.

And also, I would add with Accuplacer, the -- which I guess happens also with SATs, that more practice makes more perfect. So if it's an issue of familiarity or not having math and that increasing scores, it says something about perhaps the instrument that you're using.

So I think there's a variety of approaches. And again, the -- you know, the -- and I totally understand the frustration in terms of looking at the data, because the improvements have been rather small. And again, with a part-time population, it's going the other way.

It's just that I think we -- we do have an opportunity with our 17 colleges and with the benefits of some the work -- and I just presented two of what is happening in our

system -- to really take stock of their practices and to, you know, do something and then, you know, to come back to you in a year's time or whatever to report on where we're at.

SENATOR BYE: Okay.

That was such a thoughtful answer, and I thank you for that. I think, you know, we're going to have to -- I'm sure my colleagues have a lot of questions.

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

SENATOR BYE: I would ask for some the data from these programs that you're asking about.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: But one of the good work of the Connecticut Association for Human Services has shown me is that there are so many pilots right now.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: And, you know, as policymakers, we have to sort our way through that.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: So in some ways, what -- when I think about this bill, what I'm sort of saying is, look, what we're doing now is not really working.

DAVID LEVINSON: It's not working, right.

SENATOR BOUCHER: And, you know, attitude has as much to do with success as skills or

knowledge.

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

SENATOR BYE: I would argue probably more. And kids think they're going to college and then they're in the math lab or reading lab --

DAVID LEVINSON: Right, right.

SENATOR BYE: -- and it's not as interesting. And it seems like you guys are really on to some of this embedded support in many of the institutions.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: And so, you know, now that we have the Board of Regents and we're trying to think very systemically, you know, I hope that you can come with some suggestions, and it's not really a question to you, but it's sort of a question --

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

SENATOR BYE: -- for everyone, is in the meantime, could we at least let kids try the college-level entry-level class and not say absolutely not?

I had a community college faculty member, very hardworking, very smart, I'm sure, say to me that a student can pass high school calculus and not be allowed into entry-level math at a community college. And I said really? And she said no way. If they can't pass the Accuplacer, they can't --

So, you know, as an everyday person -- and there's no doubt that what's leading to you

matters, that we need to reform K to 12 to help you.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: But there are students there now. And if this helps as many students to get on the path towards success, you know, I'd say, sort of, why not.

And do we really want to say to a student that's passed high school calculus with a B, no, you can't take entry-level math. Like -- it just doesn't make -- doesn't make sense to me.

DAVID LEVINSON: That is --

SENATOR BYE: And so why not let them try, even if they didn't.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: So -- and I think it's pretty clear the data that -- high school GPA is just as good a predicter as the Accuplacer right now in terms of success, and you really show that with your data.

So -- I'm sorry. I'm going on.

DAVID LEVINSON: No, no.

SENATOR BYE: We've been thinking about this a lot. I'm going to pass it along.

DAVID LEVINSON: These are important issues. Thank you.

REP. WILLIS: We really have put a lot of thought into this. Obviously don't spend full time,

as you do, dealing with these issues, and that's why we're reaching out to -- to you.

The challenge of the community college is tremendous, and the need, the gap -- you know, the range of what's needed in learning support is incredible.

And I'm going to get to the CAPT testing and the Accuplacer and PSATs and SATs when we get to the other bill.

But many students end up in the community college that had learning disabilities, have learning disabilities, which is a whole other challenge other than just catching up or English as a second language. They have serious learning disabilities, and we don't really talk about that.

And as someone who's had somewhat of a background in special ed., for a college professor to have to deal with different learning styles, you know, how does that fit into remediation developmental work?

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes. And that's a very important point.

One of the issues that a lot of students go through, and certainly their parents, is they might have an IEP while they're in K to 12. And then they go to community college, and that no longer holds.

The issue of working with students with learning disabilities or learning differences I think is a major challenge.

If you were to look at our institutions, you know, we are very much understaffed in that

area. I think many of our institutions, if we have one person who is labeled the LD, learning disabilities coordinator or whatever, that institution is probably doing better than others.

And I think that's a critical issue that needs to be addressed, because there is a lack of continuity. I mean, I guess by law there's a lack of continuity, but it really does, I think, a disservice to students.

And, you know, what I -- what I think of there again is thinking of a much more, you know, tailored, individualized approach, of assessment, so that a student who has learning differences, she or he is identified, and those differences are understood. And hopefully in the ideal world, it would be a customized learning plan for that student.

But I think learning disabilities enters in tremendously, and it's something that I think we need to do more work on at the community college level and something that, again, when I think of the -- you know, the P-20 council or those kinds of initiatives, let's look at that as to what goes on to the community college.

Because it's very difficult to discern what's going on. Is it an issue of remediation? Is it an issue of learning disabilities? Is it an issue of foreign language, of someone who is maybe not a native English speaker who is testing a certain way not because she or he doesn't know the content or has the ability but may get something up get tripped up in terms of the language issue.

We see a lot of conflating courses going on, which, again, might lead to a remedial placement. And yet how or why the student is there and what she or he needs to improve can be vastly different.

So the learning disabilities piece I think is a -- is a critical thing we need to look at.

REP. WILLIS: Is that something -- the IEP is a very valuable tool.

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

REP. WILLIS: And it follows the student if it's been identified right through the 12th grade.

Should the IEP follow the student?

DAVID LEVINSON: I think it would be --

REP. WILLIS: If they want.

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

REP. WILLIS: That's their choice.

DAVID LEVINSON: I think it would be advantageous. I think it would be advantageous.

I know that at times at my institution when a student comes to see our learning disabilities coordinator, she or he would perhaps bring their IEP, you know, even though, of course, we will say we can't, it's not the same. But I think it's very useful.

I think the -- the issue -- and my wife's a special educator, so I'm very familiar with IEPs and that -- you know, it is -- part of the struggle for us, quite honestly, is the human resource component, to really be able to address that and also the cost.

I think that's a grade idea. I think whatever information we can glean about the students coming to us, the more the merrier. I think that would be excellent.

REP. WILLIS: I do want to pick up on something you just said, and that's the support services for students.

At the community college, the ratio is just too high and it is so overwhelming. I know for years I -- there's never been the resources to add there. We should be doing more. Okay.

Any other questions? Yes, Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, President Levinson.

DAVID LEVINSON: Welcome.

SENATOR BOUCHER: And thank you for your service on so many levels.

DAVID LEVINSON: Thank you.

SENATOR BOUCHER: We really appreciate it.

One of the things that doesn't -- hasn't been discussed, but I wondered if you could help me understand this better, the data that you provided shows those that need to take remediation and their ability to graduate and how many years they graduate,

yet I'm much more interested in if there's data on those taking remediation in a particular subject area and then the subsequent taking of a course for credit at that same institution and their success rate of graduating from that.

To me, that is more an indicator as to whether remediation is successful, necessary and should be absolutely a prerequisite. And if there are prerequisites to courses, that individuals can take a place -- in other words, a -- a placement test that will allow them to waive any prerequisite. And I would say that that's a general question, not just for you but our state university system, our University of Connecticut, any of our state universities.

If there's someone that presents itself with talent in a particular area, skill set in a particular area, couldn't they waive a prerequisite if they were able to place out of and showed that they had the basic skills of that particular prerequisite?

Because I do understand the concern about having open enrollment completely and then you have a much higher rate of failure. Or how does the instructor deal with that from the standpoint of grading if, you know, half of the class fails that particular course and can't move on to the next stage.

Thank you.

DAVID LEVINSON: Thank you.

And that data is available, and we'll -- we'll get that to the Committee, because I think that is very important. Because I

think what you will find is some degree of flexibility in terms of (inaudible) structures and certainly institutions may handle this differently, but I'm -- I can -- I feel very strongly I can say that there are allowances made and there are ways of navigating those pathways quicker.

So I will --

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you for that.

I'm particularly troubled by the statistics presented, because oftentimes, part-time students or those at the community college level have other barriers to graduation.

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

It isn't necessarily the coursework or being able to pass a course. It may be circumstances in their life, demands in their -- many work full time or part time. Demands on where they are able to stay or live.

So many other factors could play into that, including needing to make a living, particularly in this economy, and I'm worried that those statistics are skewed when presented as a direct result of remediation.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes, that makes sense.

And I would just add, you know, in response that, you know, my experience, you know, teaching students at my institution and working with them, their lives are incredibly complex.

And the experience I had with the learning community I referenced before -- because I really got to know these 18 students in a very intense way. It was just -- it was amazing to me that many of them were, first of all, there; and then when I learned of some of the issues that they were going through --

I mean, I had a student, for example, whose mother lived in the Bronx and spoke no English, and he would have to go with her to medical appointments, and therefore he had to miss class.

Or I had a student in one class once who actually would fall asleep in my class. I thought it was, you know, me. It turns out he worked the night shift at Norwalk Hospital in the emergency room basically as a, you know, a maintenance person.

So when you really break it down and talk to these -- to our students, you know, their lives are incredibly complex. And to navigate through -- to just come to us often is an amazing achievement. Of course you want them to achieve once they're there. So point very well taken.

REP. WILLIS: Representative LeGeyt.

REP. LeGEYT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning to you, sir.

DAVID LEVINSON: Good morning.

REP. LeGEYT: Taking off on what Senator Boucher has asked and commented on regarding the various pressures that come to bear on a student who is going to community college or

a four-year institution, especially at the beginning when they're trying to get used to the change in independence that's required of them from their high school experience and the -- perhaps the lifestyle change that comes with that, I'm wondering, the -- the people who -- the faculty members who are administering the remedial and developmental courses, what percentage of them have had some experience teaching in the high school setting, what percentage of them have some training in educational methods as opposed to their subject matter authority.

And because I think that that's -- I think that that's a huge factor in the success. Students who come out of high school on a somewhat -- well, to some degree sheltered academic situation and then are opened up to the broader spectrum and environment of college where many things are left to their own decision-making, I think that those added pressures add to the remediation problem.

And if the people who administer those developmental courses have an ability to help someone more than simply to provide the -- provide the material -- I'm not suggesting that that's all they do, of course -- that that would seem to add to the success rate.

I wonder if you could comment on that.

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure, sure. Again, a number of things come to mind.

You know, the issue of transition from high school to college I think is difficult for many students. And, you know, all of our

institutions at least have some type of a -- whether it be a college form course or freshman seminar class, and often as a required element what they have to take when they enroll as first-year students, that addresses some of the issues in terms of what are the expectations of being a college student, the differences in terms of going from high school to college, familiarity with the services offered at a -- at an institution, et cetera.

And also, you know, you're looking at some of our institutions which are commuter institutions, community colleges, and then also our state universities that have strong residential components.

So that is also being -- something that is being addressed in -- you know, through residential life in those areas.

In terms of looking at the actual faculty involved in remedial instruction, at least I could speak from, you know, what I look for when I'm hiring those folks and what my staff are, and that is that there certainly is a need for some expertise in the subject matter. But our primary concern is do they really understand the -- the issues of teaching and instructing a remedial student?

Do they understand the pedagogy that works, the different alternatives?

So they may not have or may not may not be able to hire -- for example, you might hire a math instructor. She or he may not have a have -- at my institution may not have a Ph.D. or -- or advanced beyond -- much beyond a master's degree; but, however, if

he or she has an understanding of issues of learning styles, of issues concerns learning disabilities, of contextualized learning, if they're familiar with different approaches. And typically, at least in my institution and many, to go through a certain process means you're done -- you'll be asked to do a couple of demonstrations of your actual teaching, that there are ways of ensuring that.

So I think there's -- there's a lot of sensitivity towards that for people who are instructing remedial students what's involved.

And again, I could just think back to my experience last fall. Last fall was the first time that I -- I personally taught remedial students, and they were in, again, a college-level course I was teaching. But these were students with remedial needs.

And as the instructor in the remedial English class told me, wait until you see some of the challenges. And, quite honestly, it wasn't until I instructed those students that I understood what -- what she was getting at.

So I think focusing on -- on, again, the -- the art of being an effective teacher or professor to developmental students is very important, and I really do believe that is part and parcel of the hiring processes that our -- that our institutions engage in.

REP. LeGEYT: Thank you for that.

I -- my other question has to do with, well, asking you as a -- a member of the Board of

Regents and also as a community college president, I want to know what you think -- your opinion as to the success and/or benefit that SB 40 would provide to the -- to the college experience, especially for someone who needs remediative or developmental coursework.

DAVID LEVINSON: So in terms of the benefit of the legislation as currently written?

REP. LeGEYT: Yes.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

A VOICE: (Inaudible).

DAVID LEVINSON: Trying to be politically. Yes.

I think -- let's look at the benefits side. I -- I think there is something to be gained by -- by challenging students clearly to aspire to high standards, in other words, that --

The way I would look at it in terms of -- of our new 17-college system is wouldn't it be great to -- to, first of all, to a student going through a given subject area to present him or her with really a pathway, you know, not just --

I guess part of it is I'd like to have a situation where students understand what is -- what's the end goal.

It's almost like you start from the end and work your way back. And -- and there is actually Completion by Design, which is a Gates-funded initiative that does that.

And so what you do is instead of starting that, you need to do X, Y and Z to get into Math 095, you show the student what he or she should attain in terms of eventual competency in a subject matter to graduate, and then you backtrack and you break down the different steps so that --

Of course you don't want the student to feel totally intimidated, that it can't be done, but you break it down into doable steps. And again, like what Housatonic does with their mathematics instruction, so at every kind of landmark, you can then proceed to the next level and you can do it in a self-paced way.

So I -- what I think the -- you know, the greatest thing about our new system is that if you're entering a community college and you aspire to get a -- a baccalaureate degree, that you will see what is the four-year institution's requirement upon graduation, which, again, depending on the program, can be very different than what you're going to be asked at the community college to achieve.

But you break down those steps, and you -- you look at it as kind of a -- a ladder or latticed process. So therefore, the student knows where she or he needs to go, knows what she or he needs to, you know, master as they go along, but it becomes less of a task that seems so huge that there's no way of getting there.

So that would be the positive -- kind of a positive spin, so to speak, on looking at this.

And again, the idea, as Senator Bye said before, of -- of putting the high standard and putting that challenge, because, you know, there is something very intriguing to say to someone, okay, you have the right to do this and, you know, to sort of paraphrase what had been some policies in the prior, you have the, quote, right to fail.

I mean, there is a -- a potential upside to that, but again, might be a -- a danger, too.

REP. LeGEYT: Thank you for that. And I just -- my last comment has to do with the issue of motivation.

Senator Bye's framework of allowing students to take AP courses without necessarily -- any sort of qualifying GPA, whatever, assumes that certain students will have the motivation to work through those courses regardless of the difficulty involved, and that's in a somewhat protected high school environment.

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

REP. LeGEYT: But when students go to a community college, four-year institution and are challenged with the opportunity to take a course that by other measures they may not be ready to take, motivation is a crucial part of their success.

And the different environment that a technical -- community college or four-year institution provides makes -- makes it more -- the onus is more on them to develop the motivation and the confidence. You referred to that before.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes, yes.

REP. LeGEYT: So I'm concerned that that would increase the failure rate if they aren't under some structured plan that community college would provide, would necessitate some training before they go into other courses.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes. No, I think that's critical. I think, you know, a student making the transition, what are his or her support networks, what -- what kind of situation -- what is there -- the group with whom they are -- to whom they are being socialized, and how is that helping to support them?

And that's why, you know, going back to the example of learning communities, what I think is a very powerful thing is that when you do have cohort groupings like that going through sequential courses together, there's a level of camaraderie that exists, or I think of, you know, the professional programs at my institution, nursing, you know, the nursing students.

By the time that they -- they graduate with degrees, they're one big happy family. I mean, just what they exude at a nursing pinning ceremony, you can tell these students have really formed lifelong bonds, and in many ways that connectedness is what got them through all kinds of challenges, including a very difficult curriculum.

And so I think that -- we think of what Senator Bye is proposing, you know, if we think about, okay, if we wanted to go a little bit on that route, you know, what are

the support structures, what can we provide to students in -- that may want to talk at that leap? Where would the -- would the support come from?

And, again, you know, making the transition from high school to college in and of itself is a major step. But again, I just often think of what is the social context in which a student is learning and how do those social supports either motivate a student or at times they end up with the wrong crowd and they -- they move in the opposite direction.

So I think those points are very important.

REP. LeGEYT: Yes.

And collaboration and teamwork are now an essential part of our educational system, which, you know, took the place of the factory model of decades ago, and so I think that's absolutely on point.

Thank you.

DAVID LEVINSON: Thank you.

REP. WILLIS: Dr. Levinson, I have few more questions.

REP. WILLIS: Sure.

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

REP. WILLIS: One just following up on your learning communities.

One of the issues that I have had with -- first of all, I think they're a wonderful

concept. The issue is numbers. I look at the community college, record numbers, 52,000 I believe you're at now, yes?

DAVID LEVINSON: Even probably higher, more like 57, 58.

REP. WILLIS: Okay.

And we're talking about small cohorts of kids -- not kids, students --

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

REP. WILLIS: -- who are in these learning communities, and they work very effectively. But it's like many of the pilots that we've been looking at over the years. We looked at adult ed. last year.

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

REP. WILLIS: We're trying to come up with different concepts of getting these students ready before they even get to your door.

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

REP. WILLIS: So the learning community, while it's great and it's a great model and I agree about the nursing, I saw some of those students and visited with them, they are amazing and they have bonded, but we have to look, you know, beyond.

And I don't think -- do all the community colleges have learning communities? I was under the impression not everybody has one.

DAVID LEVINSON: I don't -- I don't think so. I think many do, but I don't believe all do.

REP. WILLIS: So that was one thing. But I wanted to follow up on --

DAVID LEVINSON: Actually, could I address that a little bit?

REP. WILLIS: (Inaudible).

DAVID LEVINSON: Because the issue of learning community clearly, you know, self-learning communities of 18 students is not sustainable. We could not have done that without the funding of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

But again, the idea of putting students into teams and really using technology as a mediating course of providing that connectedness is something, because as I learned from our younger students and also my daughter, for that matter, you know, they live in the cyberworld, and for better or for worse, you know, Facebook and whatever else comes down the road is how they connect to one another.

And I guess I -- I -- because I once had an opportunity to meet with Melinda Gates out in Seattle at American Association Community College meetings, and her response was just that. This sounds way too expensive. How can you do that? And, you know, of course here is Melinda Gates, I figure we'll talk technology, and -- and really sort of talk a bit conceptually about how you could use the technology as a way of -- of binding students or -- together, especially looking at community college students or many of our students who are working part time or full time or don't have the seat time in courses

and more and more are taking online courses, et cetera.

So I think there's ways -- and I can't tell you I have the blueprint with me this morning, but there are ways of creating, you know, cyber-learning communities that could potentially do some of what you do in class in a way that would be less costly, but that's just a thought I had.

REP. WILLIS: I wanted to go back to something that I mentioned in the opening statement that I made about learning support, and how this committee when we were looking at how we were going to name bills or look at issues, last year we said, well, we shouldn't say remediation. We should talk developmental, because that sounds -- there's less of a stigma attached --

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

REP. WILLIS: -- if you say developmental.

So taking on that thread and not going to the proposal but sort of playing off what's being proposed before us today, what -- you know, what I thought about or, you know, feel could work would be placing students in English 101 but concurrently enrolling them in a companion course. So you sort of would take that decrease, that stigma, also put it more into context, you feel like you're working towards something and at the end of the day you're going to have some credits.

And then maybe if you were in this concurrent class, that could be a learning community, because it would be maybe the same students who would be taking the

course, then they have to take these support classes in addition.

University of Maryland apparently -- this is a model that they're using call The Learning Project. I read through some of the things that they offer there. They obviously have have spent a lot of time and revamped very successfully the way they deliver learning support.

So I wondered what you thought of that idea.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes. I think that makes, you know, good sense. I -- you know, one of the things that the research literature is real clear about is in terms of remedial education, contextualized learning is the most effective.

So if you can contextualize in an English 101 or whatever the kind of learning supports that student needs, and to do it in a way that it's -- it's an appended aspect of the class, the student still can get bona fide college credits, I think that's a -- that's a great idea.

I think that, you know, the standalone -- in my own opinion, the standalone remedial approach that isn't contextualized isn't terribly effective. And the research that I'm familiar with is that it can be contextualized in all different ways.

If a student is in a sort of technically oriented curriculum, if you can contextualize within the actual technology or career that a student aspires to, remedial instruction, that's better.

So I think that's -- that's something to look into, and I'd love to explore it that further.

REP. WILLIS: I also think that in terms attendance, that it counts in a bigger way, would -- would sort of encourage someone to participate more, and then the support that's running concurrently with it has more meaning.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes, yes. I think you're right. I mean, I think the issue is when a student -- I mean, there are a couple of things that happen in my experience.

When a student places into -- into remedial or developmental learning, they're often distraught because they have a high school diploma and so the issue is, well, how could I have done X work or sometimes they've done beyond just the minimal, they've done fairly well, is how can I do that in high school and then come to you and you're telling me that?

So that's one transition point that can be very discouraging.

Secondly, when a student learns that the credits that he or she is taking do not count towards college and however do count towards financial aid, so they're eating up their
Financial aid, that, too.

So I think however we can embed remedial instruction in a way that addresses some of those issues, I -- I think is really worth looking into.

REP. WILLIS: One of the things that came out yesterday from I believe one of the professors professors that testified was the -- on another issue is the issue of the changes in federal Pell Grants. How would that -- if it takes longer for these students, there's going to be a limit on these students getting their Pell Grants, and it's almost more -- there's more pressure on us as policymakers to make sure those students don't run out.

DAVID LEVINSON: Exactly. And that's why, going back to what I said earlier, we could do, you know, more of the assessments while they're in high school. And if there are any areas that need remediation, do it then. Because you do -- I mean, because you're already, you know, essentially -- as (inaudible) pointed out, of course you're paying twice in that moment.

But also, in terms of the student -- especially with the -- with the changes in Pell, you really want that student to be using their financial aid towards qualified college credits.

So I agree we need to really change that model. And again, the -- the Start Program at CUNY is the one that I'm probably the most familiar with, but those kinds of models I think would be very, very useful.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you.

And in terms of college readiness, I broached this in a high school recently, talking about the challenges of college readiness and trying to make the connection to them and they said it was the fault of

the elementary school teachers.

DAVID LEVINSON: Oh.

REP. WILLIS: Passing the buck.

DAVID LEVINSON: What's important is, you know, the Know To Go campaign that the Lumen Education Foundation and also the American Council on Education is promoting.

And I think that's also very important work and it's something that I know and some of my local school districts have been giving out. So you really also sensitize students and their parents as to what you need in order to succeed in college.

And especially when you're dealing with -- as many of us do -- with first-generation college students, there really is no person or no entity guiding them, you know, through -- through that pathway.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you, Doctor Levinson.

DAVID LEVINSON: You're welcome.

SENATOR BYE: And I want to thank you for your patience and people in the room for their patience, but at least knowing that you're a community college president and have been, you're now at the Board of Regents, you're having a big influence on the policy, I hope you'll indulge a few more questions so we can understand the landscape.

DAVID LEVINSON: Oh, I'd -- happy to. Of course.

SENATOR BYE: I think if you look at the legislation, Section B sort of goes to what

my co-chair is talking about in Maryland and what you're talking about in the CUNY -- do they say CUNY or no? City --

DAVID LEVINSON: City University of New York, CUNY, yes.

SENATOR BYE: CUNY. About contextualized remediation.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: What percentage of remedial work now offered in Connecticut at our community colleges would you estimate are done in a contextualized way versus a pull-out method where you take a remedial class that's totally separate from from credit-bearing classes.

DAVID LEVINSON: I would estimate very little. I would be hesitant to give you an exact percentage. It certainly is information that I could ascertain.

SENATOR BYE: That would be great.

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: I'm guessing it's less than ten percent.

DAVID LEVINSON: That would be my -- my --

SENATOR BYE: Based on my --

DAVID LEVINSON: That would be my guess, too. You know, we -- at my institution we were involved in a study that Dolores Curran that teaches college at Columbia University did on contextualized learning.

We did it on science courses and we had a control treatment group of students, some who were not administered anything other than a typical remedial instruction and those who did it in a science-based curriculum.

And, you know, the people in the science-based curriculum, these were aspiring health majors, did much better. And I know that at that time, it was, I believe, the first time my institution ever did something like that.

So I would -- I would off the top of my head concur with you that it's rather low.

SENATOR BYE: Yes. And I just say that in the context of, you know, you can see why we feel a little impatient here.

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

SENATOR BYE: You know, like -- so Representative Willis is mentioning it, you're mentioning it. And when you go to these national meetings, we hear about what's happening with contextualized learning in California and how much more successful students are being.

So a bill like this, it says kind of like kids in the real class could build on this idea of contextualized learning, because if they're in the class, you better do something to support them, which brings me to my next question, which is about the financial incentives here, because I think here we're policymakers sitting here, and we have some say over a higher ed. approach

budget, and right now the state is not necessarily paying for the remedial classes. It's the student's loans and Pell Grants.

So as we move to another model, those of us sitting here who believe in a different model, have to also say we may need to invest --

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

SENATOR BYE: -- in a different model. But what I'm -- and I would -- I agree. I think part of why this is hard to d untangle is the financial -- the way the finances are structured currently.

But I will also say that I've been on campuses at Tunxis, at Manchester, at Naugatuck, and I've seen the student support centers where students who are taking classes can go and get support for whatever class they're taking, open all kinds of hours, but I -- I think Representative Willis is right to say we're going to have to really think about that and look to the presidents of the colleges to say if we move in this direction, because we all agree contextualized is better --

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

SENATOR BYE: -- what kinds of supports need to be in place?

So I just ask you to take that back with you.

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

SENATOR BYE: Because we can't ask for something

and then not provide the supports necessary to make it happen.

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

SENATOR BYE: But I would argue the current system is really not working for the students.

A couple of things I was just going to ask you to bring back --

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

SENATOR BYE: And you don't have to reply, but I think this committee would really like data on pilots.

DAVID LEVINSON: Mm-hmm.

SENATOR BYE: Some data from -- that Senator Boucher asked about, about success in classes following remediation is a really important piece of data.

And then I was going to ask if you could break down some of this data by socioeconomic status and race --

DAVID LEVINSON: Okay.

SENATOR BYE: -- to see are there groups that are being disproportionally affected by the current practices.

I think that would be -- and I'll just close with Representative LeGeyt talked about motivation and the concern about putting kids in classes that they may not be ready for and what that might do for their motivation.

And I would say that I've talked to students who have been in remedial ed., and they feel that it's demoralizing to have to take this class totally outside of what they're doing.

DAVID LEVINSON: Right.

SENATOR BYE: And like you're saying, I finished high school, here I. Am, and so I think there are issues of motivation --

DAVID LEVINSON: Mm-hmm.

SENATOR BYE: -- on both sides. And I would just say as you think about this bill and giving us input as we go on, I am really interested in definitely counseling students.

It's not like sink or swim, but I'm just saying can we break the dead wall that says, nope, if you don't pass, no matter what, Accuplacer, you cannot take this class.

So I want to think about a policy that breaks down that brick wall for that student that really is motivated to try a regular entry-level class.

So I'll stop there. Thank you.

DAVID LEVINSON: Thank you.

REP. WILLIS: We're going to have to stop here for -- because we have run out of time for the officials section of the public hearing, and I'm going to switch to the public.

And what I'll do, President Schmotter, if you don't mind waiting -- in fact, I'm sure you'll love the next testimony that will come before us, and I would like to call up

Liz duPont deal from the Connecticut Association of Human Services, who Dr. Levinson referenced in their work in his prepared remarks.

Thank you, Dr. Levinson.

REP. WILLIS: Hi, Liz, nice to see you.

HB 5028
HB 5029

LIZ DUPONT-DIEHL: Good afternoon. Senator Bye, Representative Willis and members of the Committee, thank you for hearing my testimony today.

My name is Liz Dupont-Diehl. I'm the policy director with the Connecticut Association for Human Services.

CAHS works to end poverty and empower all families to build a secure economic future. We produce research and analysis on child poverty and other issues as needed to drive advocacy, and we have long been concerned with the developmental or remediation achievement gap.

CAHS has researched this topic extensively, as you've heard. Our reports are referenced in my testimony, and they're also available on our website on this topic.

I'll skip over some of the things that I was going to say about the remediation education gap, because we've heard it, and you are well aware. I'll just touch on some very familiar indicators.

About 400,000 working adults in Connecticut now lack a high school diploma or GED or the basic skills to become employed. Community college enrollment is soaring, as about 61

percent of students require at least one remedial education class.

We've heard what happens to those students as they use up their Pell Grants and do not succeed at getting their postsecondary education.

According to the Working Poor Families Project, about 41 percent of adults in Connecticut have low literacy levels, and Governor Malloy's education session is rightly focusing on the achievement gap which continues into college. Everyone we hear about what happens in grade school.

One key cause is a disconnect between public schools and higher education. Many educators attest that public schools do not have a tangible understanding of the demands and needs of colleges.

I speak today in support of SB 5028 and 5029 for their simple, yet powerful, ability to bridge this disconnect.

Pilots or programs such as Dr. Schmotter's that use similar elements to connect public schools and higher education now show tremendous results.

SB 5028, requiring school boards to work with higher education to align Common Core Standards with their college-level programs, is an excellent first step. This should be revisited periodically to assure it remains responsive to changing workforce and educational needs. And these partnerships can also include community colleges and universities.

well as the college -- as well as the college transcripts, and they really did a very detailed study of what the students have learned in high school in advance, right, because as we've heard today, the students who are in remedial populations are shockingly different. The differences in their background are -- are striking.

So on the one hand, I know that the community -- the committee is also looking today at measures to improve college readiness in high schools. And those measures are likely to prove efficacious in addressing this problem; but my faculty also want me to speak in behalf of the principle of some sort of sequencing, right, the notion that there might be remedial courses that you would want some students (inaudible) need to take is an idea worth defending and hasn't been invalidated by the Time is the Enemy critique.

The second concern that we have is that the proposed change is arguably too dramatic. Especially at allowing students access in any course and especially given the uncertainty of the cause of of these problems.

Students who are able to take courses for which they are not prepared will fail -- will fail them more frequently. And this is particularly going to be a problem in STEM and social science course, which rely on math as corequisite. What I mean here is that a student oftentimes will take Introduction to chemistry, for example. You need to show that you can enroll in Math 110 or Math 101 or whatever the course is on the particular campus.

And so if you're in that class because you pass an open-access rule, then that also gets you access to chemistry, gets you access to physics, it gets you access to biology, to sociology, a whole series of other courses, and you are at risk of failing those courses now as well, right? Arguably.

Faculty members will have to judge whether a student's struggles arise from failing to master the content or from the need for math or writing remediation. This latter is a real challenge, one for which few faculty members are trained.

The last thing I would say is that there are other simpler models. Representative Willis in her questioning of the first speaker mentioned a model of -- where you had a regular class linked to a remedial class. That's a very powerful model.

Rider University has basically transformed their -- their pathways in math and writing such that it's like foreign languages. You take a placement test, you're in English I, English II, English III, English IV, whatever, they all count for college credit. But there is still that principle of a useful sequence that's pedagogically valid across the broad spectrum of curriculum.

Thanks very much.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you. That was very helpful. Yeah, speed reading. Have you testified before? You were trying to get it all that in in three minutes.

JASON JONES: (Inaudible).

REP. WILLIS: Questions or comments? Yes, Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you so much. As always, you -- you provide some really great testimony, and I particularly am going to look up the Attewell -- at Attewell study.

JASON JONES: And just very quickly, he's at CUNY. And I think that --

SENATOR BYE: Oh, great.

JASON JONES: And I think some of that research helps inform that CUNY -- the CUNY summer program, because part of the argument really is that students who are in need of dramatic remediation don't just need content information. They also need academic skill sets writ large, right?

SENATOR BYE: Sure.

JASON JONES: So that that kind of embedded or that kind of detailed focus on remediation can alleviate those concerns as well.

I didn't mean to interrupt.

SENATOR BYE: No, no problem. I appreciate it. And I think the members of this Committee are committed to providing support. We just want to get the students moving towards degrees --

JASON JONES: Right. Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: -- faster. And, I mean, I would say while I'm sure Time is the Enemy is not like

the greatest report, in fact, time is the enemy --

JASON JONES: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: -- because the longer a degree sequence is stretched out, the more we heard about all kinds of life variables today --

JASON JONES: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: -- that community college students face.

JASON JONES: Right.

SENATOR BYE: So the sooner we can get them through the sequence, I think the better.

JASON JONES: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: What -- what is your -- so you're an English teacher, too?

JASON JONES: I am.

SENATOR BYE: So you could face a student that came in who says I want to try your class.

JASON JONES: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: What would happen if the student came into your class and -- and wasn't prepared?

JASON JONES: Ordinarily what happens in English is that if a student is placed into 110 and is genuinely unprepared, you do a diagnostic -- you're supposed to give him a diagnostic assignment within the first week of the assignment. I'm sorry, the first week of the semester so the student has time just

their schedule before a drop is ever -- and so -- and so you would see how profound their -- their needs are.

And if they are genuinely beyond the needs of what you can provide in 110, then you encourage them to register for -- for further remedial class, for 099.

If they stay in the class, though, you meet with them, you have -- you conference with them. We have a writing center at CCSU and all the other schools and so forth. And you encourage the students to visit -- to visit that.

SENATOR BYE: Is the student allowed to stay in the class right now at CCSU? Let's say they get in, you give the diagnostic, you -- it says the student is, would you say, profoundly unprepared?

I don't know if that's a test score or if it's a -- a clinical judgment.

JASON JONES: Usually what -- it's a clinical judgment. We usually -- because they write -- they've written an essay and you have the essay.

What happens, usually the faculty member passes it along to the department composition committee, which includes our coordinator composition and if they agree that the student is not going to be well served from 110, then the chair of the department and the chair of the composition committee meet with the student about considering other alternatives.

SENATOR BYE: And what if the student says I know

I'm unprepared, I'm going to go to the writing center, I really love this class, can I stay?

JASON JONES: My sense is usually no. If they -- if they have not done well in the diagnostic -- on the in-class diagnostic essay, then usually they fail, they -- so --

SENATOR BYE: What would be your opinion -- I'm going to ask you now about the law.

JASON JONES: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: What would be your opinion as an English professor if it was -- and you can make all the recommendations you want, you're there to help the students, as are the people in support positions, but the student says no, I want to -- I only have so much money and so much time and I think that with this support, because there are a lot of supports on campus.

JASON JONES: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: I know my daughter goes to the writing lab every week at her college. You know, that's just what she does.

JASON JONES: Right.

SENATOR BYE: She goes with her papers and she needs the support and she gets it because there's a lab.

JASON JONES: Right.

SENATOR BYE: And, you know, so what -- what's your opinion?

JASON JONES: I believe if all the -- if the students in 110 attended the writing or used the writing center in those numbers, the writing center people would -- would fall over from exhaustion by the second week of the semester.

I mean --

SENATOR BYE: I'm not saying -- I mean, I think it's a rare student that's not going to take any advice and say, no, I really want to take this class.

JASON JONES: That really depends, because many students -- many students, the reason they -- they -- they chose -- they choose a particular class has much to do with all those life issues that you guys have mentioned already, right, just the fact that they -- they have complex work schedules or complex healthcare sched -- healthcare needs for their -- for family members and so forth.

And so some -- often what's needed is classes at particular times and particular dates, right?

And so those students very often will insist on being allowed to take a class at a particular time.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. So -- so you're saying if the student has been accepted to a college, okay, you're accepted to Central, we've looked at your transcripts, you can come in.

JASON JONES: Okay.

SENATOR BYE: And then that student wants to take

English 101, but they -- I don't know, is that the right name?

JASON JONES: 110.

SENATOR BYE: 110, thank you. Take English 110 and you say the college has a right to say no, we've accepted you as a student, but you may not take this class.

JASON JONES: Yes, I think so. Well, I --

SENATOR BYE: And you're okay with that? I mean -- I mean, I'm sorry the way I'm asking this.

JASON JONES: No, that's --

SENATOR BYE: But I'm -- I'm trying to come to terms with this myself.

JAMES SCHMOTTER: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: Afteryou've accepted a student.

JASON JONES: Right. I do think -- I do think there are lots of other valid models, for example, the one that I referred to earlier, and which is not dissimilar from the one Representative Willis had mentioned herself, that you place into a class, that that class is part of a sequence that gets you to completion of general -- general education requirements.

It counts for college credit -- because I agree with what you said earlier about the motivational challenges of remedial -- remedial courses. It's a disaster to be told you're not a real college student because you're in these class -- that's bad, right?

So I believe that there are alternate paths. I just worry about the notion that letting students in indiscriminately -- that's all --

SENATOR BYE: Yes. And I'm in total agreement with -- as you saw with Representative Willis and what's she suggests and what's going on with CUNY. I do think that's a direction we could move in --

JASON JONES: Right.

SENATOR BYE: -- and be successful, but today there are students in college who --

JASON JONES: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: You and I are just going to disagree on this one, because my guess is you give a lot of extra time to your students when they need support.

JASON JONES: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: And you have a lot of students already who need a lot of support --

JASON JONES: Right.

SENATOR BYE: -- to get through your class.

JASON JONES: Right.

SENATOR BYE: You know, so -- but I'm just going to disagree about the access, like, okay, you told me I shouldn't take it, I'm not going to take it, but -- or I want to take it and --

I just don't think the college should be in the position of accepting a student and then saying we accepted you, we've looked at your high school transcript, we've looked at your SATs, we accepted you, but you can't take this class.

So, you know, we'll just disagree about that, I guess.

JASON JONES: That's true. But there's -- but that's not that different from prereq -- from formal prerequisites and other -- in our areas, right, that we -- we expect, and to be able to receive to sophomore status or junior status, you learn certain kinds of things and so forth, and so this is not radically different.

REP. WILLIS: I'm going to follow up (inaudible) on this.

I guess I'm having a hard time getting my hands around this as well, because unlike a community college, the CSU system, you apply, you look at transcripts, you -- you've taken the SAT, you've had a writing sample. How bad --

I mean, they got accepted to a university, and they can't write?

JASON JONES: But students are admitted to CC -- to all the CCSU schools on the broad -- on the basis of a broad -- on a -- on a consideration of their portfolio.

I mean, it is (inaudible). Students have many different strengths. One of the things I've learned on --

REP. WILLIS: I hope.

JASON JONES: No, no, no -- no, not at all.
My point -- one of the things that's been really interesting to me is the coordinator of undergraduate research at CCSU, of our undergraduate research team is often students in 110 and undergraduate courses who I'm a little worried they're in school, and then -- and then -- Undergraduate Research Day I see them talking about the stuff that they have worked really hard on that they care about dramatically, and it's really powerful.

I mean that -- mine -- so students -- the fact that a student is not awesome in 110 is not in my view a moral failing or a reason to kick them out of school. It's -- we just need to bring their writing skills up to par, especially their academic writing.

Students might have done very well in high school but the high school writing curriculums are not always aligned with what we except at Central.

REP. WILLIS: Okay. That's fair enough.

Now, we're talking about English, so one can be taking remedial English, but they could be in a chemistry course or -- or a math course because they're better in math.

JASON JONES: Yes.

REP. WILLIS: So -- okay. So you could go assuming you met the prerequisite requirements.

JASON JONES: Yes, yes.

REP. WILLIS: Okay. Thank you very much. Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Yes. Thank you so much for your testimony, because I think you're the best-placed person right now that I've heard to be able to answer my question and concern about the best case for remedial --

JASON JONES: Right.

SENATOR BOUCHER: -- is to be able to say that once that student took that remedial course, whether it was in a strength -- in an area of weakness, such as math, or an area of weakness, such as English, that when they did go into the actual accredited course, that they were succeeding at a much higher rate than they might have.

So we -- again, we keep talking about graduation rates, and we don't talk about success and completion of that particular requirement, whether it be English and math.

And so from your experience, have you found that once they complete a remedial course, then they can more readily handle that particular requirement?

JASON JONES: Umm, I have two different answers to that. One is that I heard you ask that question a little bit earlier, and I have an email out to my chair, so as soon as I get an answer, I will forward that to you or to the Committee directly.

In my experience -- I've taught many students who have come out of the -- who have come out of our developmental sequence and have been in my classes; and in general,

those students are better prepared to write. They have fewer sentence level errors. They have a more general sense of what a college essay is supposed to be as opposed to the kind of standard five-paragraph (inaudible) that they are so often coached to teach in high school and so forth.

And so, again, at least for my students, I've had -- I've had no difficulties with students who are out of that sequence.

SENATOR BOUCHER: So you're saying that -- if they've gone through the remedial, that it's more likely that they will be able to successfully complete your course?

JASON JONES: Those students -- the students that I've had who have been through remedial are prepared to succeed in my class. I -- I didn't see them before they took their remedial class, so I can't say directly that -- that, you know, I would have failed them but --

SENATOR BOUCHER: So the issues can't be so severe that what they're coming with is a long history of -- of lack of academic progress or instruction that's very difficult to help remediate over a one-year or a particular course just in that particular subject area.

JASON JONES: Absolutely. Students vary widely, and it's also going to be the case that students at the CSUs differ somewhat in their needs for remediation from the standards of the community colleges, but often what's needed is a kind of reorientation or a reminder, in some cases, of the conventions of academic writing.

At Central we have nontraditional -- so-called nontraditional students as well; and often what's needed is, oh, right, that's the way you try -- you address an academic audience as opposed to a business colleague or a memo or something like that.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Before I conclude this statement, I must tell you of a personal experience with one of my own children and being admitted or successfully getting into the University of Chicago.

JASON JONES: Mm-hmm.

SENATOR BOUCHER: And math was not their strength. They got in based on very strong verbal scores and so forth, but yet they wanted to do a minor, say, in that area.

And I actually called the school and said would they be able to succeed there. And they said to me given your background, the student's background, son's background, they probably would have to take remedial courses in math because they pride themselves on that area of expertise in their college.

So there was a similar concern I think even then that many years ago.

JASON JONES: Abs -- I had almost the exact same experience at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. I was admitted entirely on the strength of verbal skills and so forth, and in my first semester, freshman year -- I can't take calculus. (Inaudible) should take calculus. That's what you should do.

I'm not going it tell the rest of story; but

yes, I learned valuable lessons about the need for preparation and sequence.

SENATOR BOUCHER: It made you a great English teacher. Yes.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you. And it's been so instructive. Do you at Central accept AP credit --

JASON JONES: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: -- if the student passes AP English?

JASON JONES: It depends -- it depends.

SENATOR BYE: For 110?

JASON JONES: It depends on the score --

SENATOR BYE: Score.

JASON JONES: I think it depends on the score, I think so.

SENATOR BYE: A three, do you know -- a three, I don't -- a lot of colleges do. I don't know -- I don't know.

JASON JONES: I haven't been on the composition committee in several (inaudible.)

SENATOR BYE: But -- so understand, as I'm sitting here from a district that has open access to AP, so now there's a student in Connecticut who can take high school college -- can take a college class when they're 15 or 16, being allowed to try that, and students who are 18 coming to college who aren't allowed to try a class that covers the same and counts the same way.

So, I mean, this is coming from -- it's only coming from my district and coming from a lot of faculty opposition to --

JASON JONES: Right.

SENATOR BYE: -- open access to AP.

JASON JONES: Mm-hmm.

SENATOR BYE: And I'm feeling like, you know, the same kind of thing. But now we have -- as my -- as my (inaudible) high school teacher said, So you mean we let anyone take a college class in high school but they don't let anyone take a college class in college?

And you can imagine, like, that teacher is having a hard time wrapping her head around that.

JASON JONES: Absolutely. But the Representative earlier made, umm, the precisely correct point, which is that there's a radical difference between the delivery of an AP course in high school and a delivery of a college course in a semester, right, that is -- you see -- the high school student sees -- did they encounter the student more frequently?

The student is usually living -- is -- I would hope still living at home. They -- they are probably working a lot -- probably working less than our college students and so forth.

So I think that first the semester -- especially that first semester in which students are tasting the light of their

freedom for the first time, right?

Sometimes they --

SENATOR BYE: No, all right, I hear you. And actually, you're helping me, and I think you're right. Representative LeGeyt made a good point, but I -- I'm still having a hard time getting out of my box.

JASON JONES: No, I understand.

SENATOR BYE: That you can't say you can't play.

JASON JONES: But it is a radical difference. There is a kind of unspoken student-professor compact that says you kind of leave me alone as often as -- for a while and I won't act too bádly in class and then I'll write a couple of the -- a couple of papers and take an exam for you and so forth and we'll kind of get on very well.

In high school, the model is really different because there's a -- there's a much more dramatic sense of consistent engagement right, and so --

SENATOR BYE: Like five days instead of three days.

JASON JONES: Right.

SENATOR BYE: It's different. It's different. I'm just -- I'm just getting at --

JASON JONES: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: I'm just making my point --

JASON JONES: Right.

SENATOR BYE: -- one more time and getting your reaction, which was a very fair answer, but for you, you're representing the faculty here, who I'm sure you're hearing a lot from -- about this bill.

JASON JONES: It turns out --

SENATOR BYE: And we'll learn a lot as we dialogue.

JASON JONES: Right.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you -- oh, I'm sorry, Representative Haddad.

REP. HADDAD: I'm way down here, I know.

Professor Jones, I'm about to make the mistake that you carefully avoided about telling about an experience in college.

JASON JONES: Okay.

REP. HADDAD: But as we've been having this conversation and in particular when you told me that you gave a -- sort of a diagnostic essay early on in the semester, I started to think about my own experience in college, and -- and I still remember the college professor's name. His name was Lee Jacobus. He teaches English at the University of Connecticut.

And he asked me to do an essay, the class did an essay, I did an essay, and he -- when he -- when he handed everybody else out their grades, he asked me to visit him at the end of the class and told me that he wasn't going to grade my paper, that it was so incredibly horrible that he -- that he just asked me to re -- redo it, which I did.

And I realize now looking back that what I was struggling with was -- in my first semester of college was understanding that I was -- I was in a world of an entirely different set of expectations than what I was dealing with in high school.

And -- and I'm wondering what you can discern from the -- about a student on the basis of a single essay or an essay or two in terms of what they're struggling with.

And so, you know -- and I wonder what would happen -- what would have happened if Professor Jacobus had begun at that point to counsel me out of the class.

And so I'm just looking for a reaction from you about what you can discern on the basis of some early testing or an early essay.

JASON JONES: What you usually do is if the -- excuse me, at least in my classes is if -- if -- what you're looking for is a kind of minimal fluency in English, right? The sentences are largely grammatical, right? Hopefully all grammatical, but largely grammatical, that they are organized and there's usually a sense of purpose of the essay, that it seems as though the person had thought about the -- thought about the prompt a little bit before sitting down -- sitting dun to write it, and that there was at least some sense of appropriateness in terms of tone, right?

When you get the essay, of course you don't look at the essay and say, you know, this person doesn't belong. You want to talk to the student and find out what happened,

because sometimes the person just didn't understand the -- either didn't understand the prompt, didn't under the (inaudible) of the prompt, maybe their, you know, sainted grandmother got, you know, a case of pneumonia and had to go to the hospital. Things happen, right? You do still want to talk to them and so forth.

And there are numerous -- no one writes a developmental essay that's awesome, because you give it in a fairly time-limited way. It's about material that the student obviously hasn't had a chance to study yet and so forth, and so you're expecting a certain amount of -- you're expecting to have to teach, right?

But there are students who come to college who, for a variety of reasons, simply cannot get put together an academic essay, at least not within the constraints of taking, you know, 12 other credits, doing other stuff that the college professor wants them to do and so forth.

Those students need more support and those students can find that support usually in the remedial classes, which are a little smaller, have slightly different focuses in their assignments and so forth. So...

REP. HADDAD: And so I guess what you're telling me is that based on a few assignments, you can tell whether someone is applying themselves or not?

JASON JONES: Also by talking with them.

REP. HADDAD: Right.

JASON JONES: (Inaudible).

REP. HADDAD: Right, sure. And I guess -- and I guess what I'm left with, though, still is that if, you know, the conversation had happened differently 25 years ago, I mean, I -- I really don't know how I would have reacted.

JASON JONES: Right.

REP. HADDAD: And I -- I guess I'm glad that I had a professor who was encouraging.

So -- so -- so in the end, I mean, I think I did okay in his course. I think I got a B or a C, probably a B. I didn't go into English, although I'm here. I got my degree in a science where my talents were more suited to me, but I -- but I guess I'm still left with wondering, like, exactly how some of the stuff is sort of implemented.

And perhaps I'll talk to some -- maybe I'll go back and talk to Lee Jacobus about it and talk to some other professors, because -- because I guess I'm concerned about, you know, as was said several times, somebody who has demonstrated the ability to enter the college and is suddenly found to be sort of lacking in some respect and needs -- and it then just gets sent back. Okay.

REP. WILLIS: Representative Walker.

REP. WALKER: Thank you. And I'm sorry I didn't hear the very beginning part so of this discussion, but I -- I guess I'm sort of hearing some of what my colleagues are hearing.

I mean, you know, part of the thing is that I think is we grow; and as we go into the work world, we need to know that we're not going to know everything and that we have to learn how to take challenges and, you know, put our arms around them.

And most of the time when we go into new fields, it's a learning process. I -- I agree that the remedial classes tend to be a barrier for -- for many kids. One, because socially, which you also talked about when you were saying that the AP class is -- in high school is much different than a class in college, and I -- I'm -- I'm not understanding that. I'm still trying to figure that one out, because I think that the idea is that you are challenging the student to grow and to learn. That's the foundation of the course no matter what it is.

And I think that that's got to be implied in all courses. And when a student makes that move into college, emotionally they're saying that I know I need more support and I need more to learn, but I don't want you to put more things on top of me because I may have demonstrated a little weakness in one area or another.

So I think -- I'm concerned about the remedial classes because I've even looked at the curriculum for some of the remedial classes, and I believe that we've created even multiple layers of layers in some of the courses, and if there is somebody that's demonstrating a weakness in algebra, geometry or something to that effect, I think the professor can have the opportunity to -- to develop them, but I don't think

that the student necessarily has to take two and three other courses before they get into the actual credited courses.

But going back to your -- your statement about the AP and the -- in high school and college, can you explain to me just a little bit more of what you -- what you're saying?

JASON JONES: Absolutely. The main point that I was making is that the delivery of the course just looks totally different, because the -- the high school teacher sees the student much more frequently than a college professor would.

A college -- if a student has signed up, as many college students, like for a Tuesday-Thursday schedule, for example, they're saying that -- they're seeing that student on Tuesday and Thursday and Thursday, I mean, there's a football game that week, maybe just -- just Thursday or Tuesday, right?

Whereas in high school, they're -- you still have mandatory attendance. They're probably still living at home. They see the teacher just about every day, if not every day. All of -- all of those aspects of the delivery of the course and the structure of -- of student engagement, right, that's all completely different from in college.

And in college, the student has to supply all of that, right? And they have to -- they have to be independent workers to a much larger -- to a much larger extent. So that's the main thing that I was trying to get across.

If I could speak, too, to that briefly to the idea that as we enter the workforce, we're not always going to know and we have to learn for ourselves, that's -- that's fantastic point. And in fact, the research in composition is actually really clear about this, that as -- as learners of all sorts, whether in college or in professional schools or in the workforce, as they move up in levels of difficulty as you go from sort of first-year courses to second- and third-year courses to senior courses, you go from being a college student to being a lawsuit student, whatever, your writing often will fall apart as you move up, not because you're forgotten how to write, but because you're learning the new stuff, right?

I was married once to a lawyer who taught legal writing, and I know that she was always frustrated by these students who would get into law school and they couldn't write, but it was because they were dealing with first-year law, right, which is remarkably difficult.

That's a whole -- that's well understood in the literature, right? There's a ton of research about this. The composition -- as you go through graduate school, you're taught how to teach, you're trained to recognize those kinds of conceptual difficulties that are cognitively appropriate for the different levels.

And there's a real difference between that and the remediate -- and remediation. I mean, the kind of challenges that those students face are often an order of magnitude different.

REP. WIDLITZ: I -- I agree in the sense that it's a different level. I think what we're -- what we should be focusing more on is -- is maybe the life skills or the research patterns as opposed to just the specifics of the different levels of math or different levels of -- of writing.

I think --

JASON JONES: I agree with that.

REP. WALKER: -- every kid should probably take a research class, base something or other, that's going to teach them how to take challenges and how to go at it and everything and then go right into the core classes. I just don't think that the multiple levels of the reading and the math are the things that you need.

JASON JONES: And it is definitely the case that taking courses that don't count is miserable. I agree.

REP. WILLIS: Representative Sayers. I always do that. You're not the only one.

REP. SAYERS: You know, I went -- I never went to public school. I attended parochial schools. And at a time when anything you had to turn in had better be well-written, proper grammar, proper pronunciation, you know, and better be neat. And so when my own children started going and going to public school and -- I found that they had turned in papers that certainly I wouldn't accept and would not have been accepted when I went to school.

I was surprised. And I would ask them, Your teacher accepted this paper? She didn't have a problem with it? And they said, Yeah. And it's not that they could not have written a better paper, it's they found out that they could get away with doing a lot less, and therefore, especially since most of my kids were boys, they did less.

And -- but if someone said to them that this is not acceptable and they had to do better, it may not be that they can't do better. It may be that they'd never had to, and the expectations were that low.

And sometimes I feel that kids have to fail, take that course and find out that they're really not up to the caliber of work that that course would require.

JASON JONES: Right.

REP. SAYERS: And fail to really find out that they do need maybe more remedial help rather than to say you're not up to snuff to start with and -- I mean, sometimes they do need that opportunity to fail.

JASON JONES: Right.

REP. SAYERS: And failure isn't necessarily the worst thing in the world. Sometimes it's the best thing that happens to some people.

JASON JONES: Yes. I agree wholeheartedly with that. Again, I do think that there's a difference -- there's an identifiable difference between students who are inadequately challenged by their background and students who are in need of remedial work, especially in composition --

composition but also in math that is --

Because I have lots of students when they get their first paper back and it's a -- it's a C, a D or an F, if I had a dollar for every student who said, But I always got As in high school in English, I would not need, you know, to shift out of the alternate retirement plan and into -- into a pension. This would be a -- this would be like a retirement -- a plan.

But -- so students do need to feel. Actually, I wholeheartedly agree with that, but I do think that there are students who, for whatever reason -- and those reasons are legion -- they need more structured support first before they take -- because what happens is, the same thing happened when I took stupid calculus.

When I took stupid calculus, I wasn't ready for it. I was doing pretty well in all my other classes, and then I realized I was failing calculus, and that was -- my ego was way too big to be able to fail calculus.

So I stopped doing all my work in all my other classes and focused on passing calculus. I passed calculus, I did, but at the -- at the expense of most of my other classes that first semester, right, and that was just -- that was just dumb, right?

And, I mean, there's -- I mean, there's -- it's -- it doesn't help the students to make certain kinds of decisions based on ego or based on a lack of preparation or lack of understanding when we can get them -- I do think we will get them to the degree faster if we can provide them with some structured

support, although I agree in general that there might be needs to reform how to get credit. Those kinds of concerns I absolutely share.

REP. SAYERS: But one of the things you said earlier when you were speaking --

JASON JONES: Mm-hmm.

REP. SAYERS: -- was that they get a lot of structured support in high school, and that's the difference between high school and college.

JASON JONES: Right.

REP. SAYERS: So what you're saying is that you give them a high school in college, so you really haven't helped them move forward by providing more structured support.

JASON JONES: It's still not more frequency. Even -- even remedial classes meet one -- you know, two or three times a week. But it's a -- it's a different kind of -- it's a more targeted support based on their actual needs rather than on a kind of hypothetical ideal of what first-year writing is going to look like. That's all.

REP. SAYERS: But I think they should be able to seek that out themselves when they find that they are failing and get the tools that they need. They don't need to necessarily --

JASON JONES: That's true. That's fine. But if that happens, then that student -- they've now failed 110. They're signing up for 099, the remedial class, in the fall -- I mean in the next semester, at best, and it's often

harder to get the 099 and the 110 classes in the spring, because we usually except those to be offered in the fall. And they can't take the 110 again until the summer or the following fall, so they're even -- they are even further behind.

So if our goal is --

REP. SAYERS: This is a problem.

JASON JONES: Exactly. This is a problem.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you very much.

I just want to comment. One of the things I noticed, I'm looking at this P-20 report, and I'm looking at the number of students that take remediation at our state university, and it is shocking.

Sixty percent of the men, males, need one or more development -- remedial or developmental course. Seventy-one percent require -- of the women require remedial or development coursework, yet they've taken their SATs, they've graduated from high school, and that's the rate --

I mean, that is not -- to my way of thinking, that is just -- I get it in the community college because it's opened. I don't get it in the state university system.

That -- we need to -- this really points to the need that we need to do something.

And I just wanted to say as a follow-up, as someone who has had three girls and then a male that went to school, that if my son was put in a remedial class in his freshman

year, he would never go back. He would be -- he'd have dropped out. That would -- he would walk right out the door.

So, I mean, that's -- that's something that we real -- I don't know what your dropout rate is, but I think I'd like to find out what the CSU dropout rate is after freshman year. Actually, I think we have that. I've seen that.

But that -- that's -- that trend needs to change.

SENATOR BYE: I'm just going to add on, I think that's a really good point of my co-chair and just follow up with the data.

The student who takes a remedial class, any remedial class, their chances of graduating in four years are 12 percent.

Now, that's why the study you cite's important, because you've got to look at the things that are associated with needing a -- a remedial class.

JASON JONES: Right,yes.

SENATOR BYE: But I just want to close by saying what we're doing now is not working. What we're doing now, doing the assessment and assessing them again once they're in the class, sending them back for help is not moving students forward.

So I think a lot of the things we're talking about today, like the Link to High School, saw the model program, Dr. Schmotter, multipronged offense. But I'll just say again, it's not working, and so why not let

kids try? Because their chances of passing are so low if we put them in remedial that, for goodness sake, let them try. They might fail, as Representative Sayer says, but let them try.

I mean, I -- I was prepared in Catholic school as well, and so I was very good at writing, but my math and English was terrible. And I went into college as a biology major.

I would have had to take remediation for botany, remediation for calculus, remediation for chemistry and remediation for biology. I would have spent a whole extra year in college getting the high school, but instead I went into classes that were incredibly hard, that I struggled, barely got through my first semester freshman year, but I did, and it got me in a direction, and I -- I caught up, because, you know, not all high schools are going to prepare all kids.

But, you know, again, I'm -- I'm saying colleges can test kids. College can counsel kids in the testing. You know, colleges can do all those things and give them their very best advice three times, but you can't say you can't try.

I mean, that's all this bill is -- is really saying. You can't say you can't try. And, you know, based with 12.3 percent graduation rate for any student with remediation, I'm having a hard time -- I mean, I'm hearing you, but I'm having a hard time getting to the point of saying, oh, we couldn't possibly try this wild thing like letting the college kid take a college class.

JASON JONES: I do fear that it would be more expensive than one thing, right, meaning if one costs out, the amount -- I mean, the cost of embedding remediation in the courses, the cost of the -- the cost of failing -- while it seems like it's a simple thing, I do think it's a think that has far-reaching implications.

SENATOR BYE: And I'm not suggesting adding any dollars right now. I'm just saying let them try.

JASON JONES: Well --

SENATOR BYE: So -- and that might instruct us. But right now, we're saying no way, no how to some students.

JASON JONES: Extra dollars is hard. That's a hard thing.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you very much for your testimony.

JASON JONES: Thank you for the opportunity.

REP. WILLIS: It's always rougher on the first one, so your colleagues that follow you, they owe you.

Dr. Levinson, I'm so sorry to keep you, but this has been such a very important discussion for all of us.

DAVID LEVINSON: No, very important.

Would you like me to put the commentary in 5028 and 5029? Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

DAVID LEVINSON: No. Sure. No, not a problem. Not a problem.

Okay. Let me first discuss our position on House Bill 5028. We fully support efforts to ensure the alignment of standards and curriculum between high schools and our institutions.

Over the past two years, the P-20 Council, which was co-chaired formally by the Department of Higher Ed., and now but the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, has worked to build relationships and collaborations between K-12 and higher ed. at the state level, as well as extending to developing partnerships at the distinct -- district, I'm sorry, district and institutional level in order to better prepare students for success.

In support of these partnerships, the council also developed with the Educational Policy Improvement Center, EPIC, for short, the Connecticut College Incurred Readiness Toolkit that provides examples of strategies to align curriculum between high school and higher education, which each member of the committee received a copy last week.

District of higher ed. leaders that attend a series of workshops last fall received this toolkit, and shortly every district and higher ed. leader in the state will receive as it well.

As further proof of our support and commitment to align efforts as part of House Bill 5028, there are a number of efforts

underway in many of our institutions that have already begun to embark on this.

You've already heard about Western Connecticut State University through President Schmotter, and President Glickman, who is here today, you know, certainly has orchestrated a very important partnership between Manchester Community College and Manchester and East Hartford High Schools.

I would add that, you know, many of our institutions have other partnerships that I believe are captured in the P-20 directory.

While both examples take different approaches for their alignment efforts, both are seeking the same goal, which is to prepare students that are college and career ready, including the reduced, if not eliminated, need for remediation.

This requires faculty from both systems to work together. These are not the only examples of partnerships underway. And additional school districts and institutions have been in contact with one another that are interested in developing similar partnerships to achieve the same means.

In order to assure that alignment efforts are coordinated, we would recommend that a common core and assessments workgroup be created as part of the existing P-20 Council, charged with identifying and recommended strategies to achieve alignment of curriculum and assessments by the school year 2014 to 15, when assessments aligned with the common core standards are slated to be fully implemented.

One already known barrier to these efforts which the workgroup may need to address is the lack of common or model curricula in math and English courses which impacts the speed of scalability. And certainly the diversions in terms of the 164 different school districts in Connecticut, those pose a challenge, but that coordinating body, I believe, would be very effective.

REP. WILLIS: Questions or comments?

SENATOR BYE: Well, we had Dr. Schmotter --

DAVID LEVINSON: Okay. So we can -- move on to House Bill --

SENATOR BYE: Well, can I just ask you a belated --

DAVID LEVINSON: Sure.

SENATOR BYE: (Inaudible) but can you comment or maybe you decide when to comment, maybe after your next testimony, about the role the common core might play in helping to link high school and college in --

DAVID LEVINSON: Yes, it's -- yes, it's probably more relevant to the next, if that's okay. So let me talk about House Bill 5029, An Act Concerning Readiness Assessments and -- yes, An Act Concerning Readiness Assessments.

We support the implementing of assessments in high school that would provide students, parents, teachers and counselors with better and more timely information about whether a student is on track to being college-ready or if they may require remediation prior to graduating.

people have that background and that knowledge here.

The -- one thing, though, is that -- and I'll just be as fast as I can here. I see three basic problems, and, you know, as a college professor, I'm dealing with students coming from the high schools. Some are very well prepared, depending upon where they are from and depending upon their motivation. Others are not.

And my -- my mother was a member of the school board in Cleveland, Ohio for years. She was (inaudible) state education, and she and I have had many discussions about this type of thing here.

And so, for example, I'm not -- I'm not -- going to look (inaudible) in Connecticut, so I cannot address that; but I can say on a nationwide basis, particularly in urban areas, we have students who take chemistry with no labs. And that, of course, is a -- is obviously -- a lab is certainly crucial to that.

Also, many chemistry teachers may teach chemistry but other than the basic concepts, don't really understand it. Same thing with math. We've had situations where you've had teachers who are trying to teach calculus who don't -- do not even know the algebra.

You also have a situation where -- so therefore, you know -- and I teach some of the students who are going to be teachers themselves. Many of them, I think, are going to be very good and will be very good teachers. Others, I question.

So finally, though, let me just say this about what I think should be done, you know, and just -- because you're looking for basic information here, and that is, my father was a civil engineer, and he was a great teacher.
He took some students one time and taught them -- students who were inner-city kids who did not have a great background themselves and on his own time taught them trigonometry.

And so in a very basic way, not only did he talk about how well -- say, five plus five equals ten, he showed them how and why five plus five equals ten. Some kids do not get today in the elementary school, the middle schools and the high schools today.

It's when they get to college they're expected to understand why five and five equals ten and they would be able to explain it back to us.

So he started an engineering club in a city school in Detroit, and our of the 22 students before he died, the 22 students in the engineering club, 21 went on to get college engineering -- and got engineering degrees.
And so -- and so I want to, of course, emphasize that.

So basically, it seems to me that one basic problem here is that you have a Ph.D.s walking the streets that -- who can teach math, who can teach English, who can teach physics, who can teach chemistry or whatever, at the high school level; but because, you know, I'm stepping on toes here, but because I understand the union's

considerations and (inaudible), what have you, they can't do it because they don't have basic courses, though.

And -- and it seems to me that if you get people in the field -- engineers are great mathematicians. Engineers are great physicists. A, you get people like that who want to teach -- I've known people who have wanted to do this -- and waive certification requirements and let them -- give them temporary certifications and proof that they can teach, I think that the students -- and those who are very good teachers, many of them, and the students very well -- I think will do very well with them.

Finally, I think that, you know, you have to be very, very careful when we're dealing with remediation itself here. But again, it goes back to high schools and the middle school, I believe, more than anything else here, so that we can work with them at a -- at a higher level here.

Because truth of the matter is, if students aren't prepared, they're going to flunk out. Graduation rates, and everybody is concerned about graduation rate, are going to go lower and may even force the schools to be more selective than they are right now. Okay.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you. You covered a lot of ground.

Any questions? Any questions? Well, I thank you for your testimony, and we'll look forward to more input as -- as we go along.

JULIAN MADISON: It would be a pleasure.

SENATOR BYE: Thanks.

JULIAN MADISON: Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: The next is Dr. Rita Malenczyk.

RITA MALENCZYK: Malenczyk.

SENATOR BYE: Pretty good. Welcome.

RITA MALENCZYK: Hi.

Do I need to press this? Good afternoon, members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

For the record, I am Rita Malenczyk, professor of English and director of the Writing Program and Writing Center at Eastern Connecticut State University.

I am also president-elect of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, financial organization devoted to the administration and development of college writing programs.

I am here to offer comments on Senate Bill 40, An Act Concerning Open Access to College Level Courses. And what you may hear from me is somewhat different than what you heard from my colleague from Central.

I've directed Eastern's writing program since 1994, and I would like to share with you some details of the course we developed on our campus over ten years ago, which has been, we feel, extremely successful in meeting the needs of students who may not be as prepared as others for the writing

demands of college.

The course is called English 100Plus, and it allows students to receive college credit for one semester of work, the same amount of time required to complete the standard first-year writing class, English 100.

The goal of the standard first-year writing class at ECSU, English 100, is to provide students with a solid set of writing skills and strategies that can serve them in college and the world of work.

Because some students who attend Eastern are farther from this kind of self-sufficiency as others, as evidenced on their writing placement exams -- and I can talk about this if you want me to later -- the university provides additional instruction to help bring them up to speed.

Until the fall of 2000, this additional instruction was generally provided through a course entitled Basic Writing Skills, a remedial course which was offered through the learning resource center.

Students who placed into that course were required to complete it before moving on to English 100. So it was pre-remedial than the real course.

In the fall semester of 1999, however, English 100P, College Writing Plus, was piloted through the English department. After several successful pilot sessions, the course was approved by the university's writing board, curriculum committee and general education program committee.

As of fall 2000, Basic Writing Skills was discontinued, and since then all so-called developmental or remedial writers have been enrolled in English 100P.

This new class meets for five hours a week. Two of these hours are designated lab time, and completes the first-year rating requirement just as a standard college rating course does.

The intention of English 100Plus is to allow students who need additional writing instruction to receive it in conjunction with English 100, thus completing their first-year writing requirement in one semester rather than two and at the cost of five rather than six credits.

During the two hours per week designated as lab time, students choose -- with some guidance from the instructor -- from a number of activities which will help them improve as writers.

Lab is not simply a grammar drill workshop, although many students choose to do a variety of grammar exercises.

The lab is structured to allow for individualized instruction based on the variety of needs of Eastern's underprepared writing students.

In reviewing a sample of placement essays from 1998, we noted that students who placed into basic writing skills had difficulties with insufficient development of ideas, raw generalization, punctuation errors, mixed constructions.

The essays written by the students also exhibited other problems -- lack of introduction or conclusion paragraphs, like of focus and false starts -- indicated by large crossed-out passages that pointed to their inexperience as writers.

These problems are typical of students who have not had a great deal of instruction in writing or whose experiences with writing instruction have been frustrating and demeaning.

Such students do need more writing instruction than their peers in college writing them. But this extra instruction should not focus on issues of grammar alone.

The lab component of College Writing Plus, therefore, is used for a variety of small group and individual activities that help bring these students up to speed within the context of the real college-level rating projects that are required for successful completion of the first-year requirement.

A key component of English 100Plus is the presence in the lab classroom of writing tutors. Two trained undergraduate peer tutors are typically present in the classroom during lab time. They're also expected to hold office hours that allow for longer sessions with individual students.

Outcomes assessment has indicated that English 100Plus has been successful. English department readers review portfolios of student writing at the end of each academic year, and our evidence indicates that students taking English 100 P complete the course at the same level as those taking

English 100.

Furthermore, research conducted by Marsha Davis, a statistician on the ECSU faculty, show that is a high percentage of students who take that course pass it.

I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you. Phew. Nice you have to here. So -- so I want understand English 100Plus.

RITA MALENCZYK: Mm-hmm.

SENATOR BYE: So they take the class and two hours of lab time. How is this funded?

RITA MALENCZYK: Well, you would have to ask my administration. I mean, it was -- the tutors are paid --

SENATOR BYE: Are they work-study?

RITA MALENCZYK: It's operating funds and that's not my --

SENATOR BYE: Well, I only ask because you're describing exactly, I think, what this Committee to like to move towards, embedded support.

RITA MALENCZYK: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

SENATOR BYE: So take a class, it moves you toward credit in the same amount of time, at the same pass rate as students who otherwise would have been put into remediation for a semester.

RITA MALENCZYK: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

SENATOR BYE: And you're having success. But I think there have been some really valid points about the kinds of supports that need to be in place.

So how many extra hours a per week per pupil is it? It's two extra hours?

RITA MALENCZYK: Two extra hours.

The tutors are paid through the operating fund. Typically they're paid -- they're paid hourly, but they're paid through what would equal six hours per week, so that typically runs to, if they're tutoring one section, about $700 per tutor per semester. So multiply that by 14, if we run seven sections per semester.

Some tutors want to do it for credit, and a lot of them are English majors, so they'll take English department internship credit.

SENATOR BYE: So can you think of a way to construct a bill like this that would say you either let them take the entry-level class or you offer a class that will get them there in the same amount of time; that, you know, you can -- you can make them take a different section that comes with extra supports as long as you're moving students at the same -- I mean, I'm trying to --

RITA MALENCZYK: To construct a bill? I -- that's not my rhetorical expertise, but I can tell you -- I mean, I can tell you something else, too, about what we do in terms of placement, because I think that's kind of

important, because this question has been raised.

We do something that's called directed self-placement. And in our case, it's very directed. Some colleges have moved toward that.

We have a -- we ask them to write a placement essay, and the things that we ask them to do in that essay are consistent with a couple of things. The thing they're most consistent with is something that's called a Framework for Success Through Secondary Writing, which was developed by the National Council of Teachers of English, as well as my organization, CWPA. And if you're interested, I can provide you with that.

We ask them to write an essay for us about what kinds of writing experiences they've had in high school. Not only in English classes but also in other classes. History, I know a lot of students say they learned to write from their history teacher, you know?

How -- and the variety of their experiences. We give them sort of guiding questions. How many reading do they do? Do you only read unless you have to, all right?

And if you answer -- if you fall in -- Column A is sort of I belong in English 100Plus. Column B is English 100. If you look more like Column B, then you might want to tell us about what your writing experiences have been. And they write those essays, okay?

We read them. We do read them, because we feel that the university -- trained English

faculty read them. We spend a few days at the end of each semester, and then we either agree with their placement or we disagree. But we give them the opportunity to appeal, all right?

And what I do is I -- and I'm the person to whom they appeal. And in that case, I would look at other samples of their writing. I would probably listen to what they say about their ability to succeed.

Typically, if they feel very strongly that they can succeed in a regular course, I will let them try it. Sometimes I let them try it against medical advice, because, you know -- if they fail, right, that's going to come back to us through you guys. You know, what are people doing failing your course?

The -- so that's how that works. And what's interesting about that placement process is it also helps us to make a connection between what they did in high school in terms of writing and what they do in college, because that's important for how they transfer those skills.

They have to be able to say, okay, what I learned was valuable, but now I'm building on that. I'm doing something else. And it may be harder, but it's not -- not maybe totally different.

Anyway, that's -- that's something else that we do.

SENATOR BYE: That's helpful. That's helpful.

Is there some reason that -- because I don't really understand the differences in

acceptance rates at the different CSUs.

Are the students that come into Eastern very different than the students that go to Southern Central or Western?

RITA MALENCZYK: Having never read those students' writing, I really couldn't say. What I -- our students typically come in with -- I mean, I think -- I think Eastern is a bit more selective in terms, but I try not to get involved with the admissions thing. I try to work with the students in front of me.

What I can say is that in terms of our SAT scores, for verbal SATs -- verbal SAT doesn't correlate with writing ability except at the very high end and the very low end.

So if you've got a student who is around between four and six hundred in verbal, which is where most of our students are, someone with a five hundred 500 can be an okay writer. Someone with a four fifty maybe tests poorly on that kind of test, so could be a somewhat better writer --

I guess -- I don't --

SENATOR BYE: I'm trying to get at --

RITA MALENCZYK: I know, I --

SENATOR BYE: We're looking for something to take the scale here, you know, because as -- as you've heard, we're hearing about a lot of pilot programs, and we were in our meeting with the committee leadership, you know. This goes back to '91 --

RITA MALENCZYK: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: -- that we've been very concerned about remedial education. And, you know, we feel like we're still struggling. And obviously not all this is in the college's hands at all, but we're trying to deal with it as -- as the chairs of Higher Ed.

So I'm just trying to get at, is yours something scalable, at least, within the ECSU? I guess another way to ask that, it sounds like you're active in a sort of national --

RITA MALENCZYK: National organization.

SENATOR BYE: -- organization.

Are there sort of publications we could look to for best practices and moving students through remediation?

RITA MALENCZYK: Yes, and I could provide you with those. Those are available through our counsel, through some of the -- some of the position statements of the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

I would say, you know, I'd have to say that overall, the most -- the -- what has been published -- there's also a sort of famous in our field program for Arizona State University, and it's the Stretch Program.

Our is called a "jumbo," which is you make the course fat in one semester. It stretches it. Their stretches it out over two, but they still give the students credit.

And that program has been around for a while, and it, too, has been pretty successful, although it has challenges. And ASU, you know, (inaudible) institution. They struggle more, I think, with issues of bilingualism than we maybe do.

The -- so that would be another, you know, other publication you could provide.

But, I think, you know -- and again, I -- there's disagreement here between me and my colleagues a little bit, but I don't -- I don't think that the first -- first you've got to do this then you really get to write is the way to go.

Writing is learned through really doing it. And you get support -- you know, and, I mean, I'm thinking of -- my kids are all hockey players, right? So you get to push a puck around for a little while. We're not going to let you play a game. How demoralizing is that?

And I think that -- I agree with Representative Willis, who's not here, who said if I were placed in a remedial course, I would have dropped out, you know?

SENATOR BYE: She just walked in, so --

RITA MALENCZYK: So --

SENATOR BYE: She's agreeing with you.

RITA MALENCZYK: So this is, you know -- and much of this is student self-efficacy. You have to kind of honor that, even know, you know --

Again, I will try counsel students if I feel they've made the wrong choice, but --

SENATOR BYE: Right. And students do make wrong choices.

RITA MALENCZYK: Oh, yes.

SENATOR BYE: For sure. I'm sure I made plenty.

So -- well, I really appreciate your testimony. I think the English Plus is a really nice model. I'm going to turn it to Representative LeGeyt.

REP. LeGEYT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon.

RITA MALENCZYK: Hi.

REP. LeGEYT: As regards to English 100Plus and the lab time that's embedded in that --

RITA MALENCZYK: Mm-hmm.

REP. LeGEYT: -- when a student -- you said that you perhaps screen the students to determine who needs to be directed towards English 100Plus and that you might decide that a particular student has to take that, or based on some other items that you look at, even talking to the student, you might decide that, oh, they're all right to go ahead with straight English 100.

RITA MALENCZYK: Mm-hmm.

REP. LeGEYT: So rather than a hard and fast rule that if they don't qualify for English 100, there is some consideration given by

yourself or whoever else is in a -- you know, they meet with someone.

RITA MALENCZYK: Yes, yes.

REP. LeGEYT: It's not -- so then they have two hours of lab each week in addition to the course itself.

RITA MALENCZYK: Yes.

REP. LeGEYT: Is there some process whereby they have to pass the lab experience? How is that -- how is it structured so that somebody, even if they have to take the 100 plus, they can just skate on the lab time?

RITA MALENCZYK: No, they can't.

REP. LeGEYT: Well, tell me how that works.

RITA MALENCZYK: It's just simply -- it's part of the course.

I mean, ultimately, the -- most faculty grade -- you know, they'll make a part of their grade, participation in lab, right?

So you can't -- you can't really skate on it. And also, what we found is that students who -- because we have more or less a self-selection process, we ask students to write about which course they want to be in, all right? That's what their placement essay is.

Because the course is credit-bearing, a lot of them choose to be there. They want the work. I mean, I -- I think it's very different when you have a course that's non-credit-bearing.

But it's -- if it's credit-bearing, a lot of them will say, you know, I kind of messed around in high school, I maybe didn't do as well as I could have, or I struggled, and now I really want the opportunity to succeed here. So a lot of them will do that.

You know, students who skate on the lab time have it taken out of their grade. And ultimately, it comes to -- but it's an overall grade.

REP. LeGEYT: Yes.

RITA MALENCZYK: Generally, with most instructors.

REP. LeGEYT: Right.

RITA MALENCZYK: It ultimately comes to the idea that, you know, it's going to make your work better. Your grades on your papers will be higher if you participate in the lab.

REP. LeGEYT: So generally, there's a different motivational quotient there from -- from that same person as a high school student and that has a -- has an effect?

RITA MALENCZYK: We see that a lot of (inaudible) English, which I think is the interesting thing about the CSUs. It does give the students who are smart but who may have not worked up to their potential in high school to succeed at a college education and get a very good college education if they put their mind to it.

REP. LeGEYT: And many of the students who choose the 100Plus are doing it because they feel they need the support, but it's -- it's not

going to be delivered with a stigma?

RITA MALENCZYK: Yes, that's right.

REP. LeGEYT: Yes.

RITA MALENCZYK: A few of them kind of will feel the stigma, but once they get into the course, that usually goes away.

REP. LeGEYT: Well, it can't be nearly the stigma of having to take a separate course and not get credit for it.

RITA MALENCZYK: And we've noticed that.

REP. LeGEYT: Thank you.

RITA MALENCZYK: You're welcome.

SENATOR BYE: Yes, Representative Sayers.

REP. SAYERS: Thank you.

Just curious, of those who appeal and you allow to take the course against your better judgment, how many of them in the end do well versus how many that prove you made the right decision?

RITA MALENCZYK: I am ashamed to say that I -- well, sort. I haven't tracked that. But there's been very few -- actually, very few that I let in against my better judgment.

And in fact, I would say over the ten years we've had it, I would say two or three. And one of those students came in with his father, who was an attorney, and I made it very clear that, you know -- and in fact, I put it in writing, and I think -- you know,

what? I think the student did fine. The student seemed to be very motivated.

But I really don't know. We don't have the resources to track that, unfortunately. The -- I think motivation is really kind of key to success. We also do have a writing center now so that students who, you know, may be struggling in 100 can get help there.

REP. SAYERS: And some of them may be just to prove that, see, told you I could do it.

RITA MALENCZYK: Yes, I mean, sure.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you so much for providing us sort of a different model for us to think about.

REP. WILLIS: I'm sorry, I'm going to speed-read your testimony, but I just wanted to ask you, you saw the statistics overall for the CSU system on remediation?

RITA MALENCZYK: Yes.

REP. WILLIS: How -- are there numbers that break it down by institution, by the four schools?

RITA MALENCZYK: Are you looking -- are you asking about how many students placed into our English 100Plus? Because I --

REP. WILLIS: Yes.

RITA MALENCZYK: I could say about 30 percent typically.

But again, you have to remember how we place. There are some students who may do fine in English 100 -- and this is what's

interesting.

There are some students who may do fine in English 100, but they have confidence issues. And, you know, when somebody comes in and says I really feel like I need this course to succeed -- because of what we're asking --

Because we have a Writing Across the Curriculum program, right? So when we read the exams, if we are -- if we're on the fence about where the student belongs, we usually give them what they ask for.

And we -- we've tried to slice this a couple of ways. We've tried to cut some students. Maybe we're putting too many people there. It always winds up at about 30 percent.

But it's not -- it's not so much remediation as it is giving account for how some writers develop, right? Some develop later than others.

REP. WILLIS: Hello. Well, thank you. Thank you very much.

RITA MALENCZYK: Thank you.

REP. WILLIS: And I'm sure -- maybe I can get this information. I'll ask the assistant office, whatever they're called now, to get me some information broken down --

RITA MALENCZYK: I'm happy to provide that, yes. Thank you.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: Kevin Buterbaugh.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: Hello. My name is Kevin Buterbaugh. I'm a professor of political science at Southern Connecticut State University.

Thank you, Senator Bye, Representative Willis and the members of the Committee for allowing me the opportunity to testify about SB 40, An Act Concerning Open Access to College Level Courses.

I'm going to leave my prepared testimony little bit, because I've been sitting here now for two hours, and I have some things that I can -- I think I can address rather directly.

But one of the things that I -- I'm going to start off in the same. I actually think that this bill is likely to lead to more failure rather than success and higher costs rather than lower costs overall for the system.

And in particular, I think that this is going to impact on the math side of the curriculum more than on the English side of the curriculum in terms of remediation, and I'll get to that in a little bit about why I think that.

One of the things that we need to be aware of is that the CSU's institutions are institutions of access. We've heard actually throughout this kind of talking about that we're astounded that we have students that at a place like Southern that would need to have a remedial class to begin with, but part of that is the nature of the institution itself.

We are designed to provide as much access as possible to the various communities that we serve. And in doing that, we do end up with students at times that have significant and serious skill deficits, both writing and mathematical skill deficits.

So, for example, the average SAT score at Southern is only around 479 on both the math and the verbal. This is below the national averages; and that, again, is the average that we're admitting, which means we have students with significantly lower SAT scores than that.

And we know that while the SAT has some serious problems in terms of predictive ability, there is a correlation between your ability to complete a -- a -- a university education the higher that your score is.

This act, I believe, actually will really undermine mathematical education, which is a particular area that political science draws on heavily in terms of our curriculum.

We recommend that our students take statistics. We have statistics actually within our program for all of our students and as part of our research classes. So it's very important that our -- our students end up with very good math skills.

About 60 percent of students coming into Southern -- it's actually more than that -- are required to do some math remediation. This actually means that they have not had either college algebra or their skills are even less than college algebra.

And if you don't have a college algebra class or the college algebra background, statistics actually will boggle your mind, right?

In essence, statistics requires that you have that other foundation to stand upon. And trying to actually throw a student directly into statistics and try to give him the algebra at the same time is very unlikely to work. You can't go forward until you have the foundation to actually stand on, which is the algebra portion of the class itself.

I have a little bit of experience with this directly. I was misplaced in my mathematical education when I went to undergraduate. I went from a Calculus class into Calculus III. I never had Calculus II. I remember and can still use my Calculus I. I have absolutely no ability to use Calculus III even though I managed to pass the class. I managed to pass it in ways that don't give you actual learning of the material itself.

So this act would actually make it impossible for Southern to first require that you get the college algebra before going into something like statistics, calculus, et cetera, which I think would be very damage together students.

I know that we've been talking a lot here, and I know my time is up, so I'll try to get to the point very quickly, but we've been talking a lot about students having the choice to do these things and that we would be able to recommend, oh, you should take this class first.

My experience is that most students when you recommend -- well, not most. Many students when you recommend don't take your recommendations, especially when it comes down to something that's going to impact their bottom line or their purses strings.

If I can get away with not paying for a course, I'm going to give it a shot. And a result of that is going likely to be if a student goes straight into math without the underlying skills, they're going to end up failing that class.

And that failure, by the way, with our student population is more likely to lead to a lack of retention than at a place at -- like UConn.

Most of our students are first-generation. They do not have the kind of family support as far as or history or socialization for college, and an F might very well confirm what they might have already come to the university thinking, I'm really not cut out for college to begin with, and off they go.

Or they're going to end up trying to make up those classes, and now we've actually added to their college bills and probably their college debts as well.

All of this seems to be unjust. If we would just require the course, we might not have these kinds of problems.

One last item. In trying to remediate in the class, you're actually doing a disservice to the students that don't need remediation, and you might actually be lowering the overall level of the class so

that all students end up with a lower level of achievement in those classes rather than a higher level of achievement.

I'll actually leave it at that, and thank you very much for your time today.

REP. WILLIS: Questions? Comments? Yes, Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE: Good afternoon. Thank you for your testimony. And thanks for your patience sitting through, but in fact you have a little more perspective to come up with than --

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: Yes, I do, I actually. I found this very educational today.

SENATOR BYE: Yes, which is nice.

So I have couple of questions written down. I'm sorry, I've got to find them here. Just give me a minute.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

SENATOR BYE: Remediation. Yes, okay.

Oh, one thing was I just want to be clear that no one is suggesting that someone -- if there's a prerequisite to statistics, that the student would need to pass that prerequisite to statistics.

There's nothing about this bill that says anything about prerequisites. And certainly faculty are -- in their disciplines are well suited to -- to decide the course of study, so, you know, just --

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: (Inaudible) briefly.

Part of the issue is the statistics currently cannot be taken if you don't score high enough on the incoming placement class.

We actually have I think five or six of what are call general education math courses, statistics being one of those.

If a student comes in without the proper either placement or educational background, they will actually be asked to take college algebra first.

So essence, it's not a prerequisite. The college algebra course is considered the developmental or the remedial class.

Most political science majors, by the way, have to take that college algebra course.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. I hear what you're saying, and -- and probably you and I will disagree, as someone who had four semesters of graduate statistics, and I was never any good at algebra, but I was very good at statistics, I think that they --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

SENATOR BYE: Makes two of us. Sorry.

But I can understand if college algebra is a prerequisite having to take that. So I understand what you're saying.

I guess I'm saying I hear your concern about that, but I think if statistics can be your entry-level class, based on, you know -- then you should be able to try that, and if

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I guess I'm saying I hear your concern about that, but I think if statistics can be your entry-level class, based on, you know -- then you should be able to try that, and if

you don't make it, don't make it.

But I'm disagreeing with a lot of people today in order to get reaction, but also to try to inform our policymaking.

So you're saying anyone can take statistics as an entry-level class who's admitted?

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: That's right, unless they on the placement exam show that they have a skill deficit, which I believe actually is about 60 percent of students at Southern are required to take either I think it's called Math 102, which is the college algebra class --

SENATOR BYE: Right.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: -- and about 20 percent of our students are so deficient in math that they're required to take what's called 095, which is actually giving them basic arithmetical types of skills.

And this skill would actually mean that those students would also be able to go right into a statistics class, and they don't even have the medical background to take college algebra.

SENATOR BYE: Right.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: All right. So this is a very problematic set of students that would be -- have the choice to take that kind of a class.

SENATOR BYE: And I think it's fair to this -- for this Committee to think about math and English separately. I mean, I think this

broad start of a bill to get reaction and so --

I mean, I can certainly understand how as a Committee we could look by CSU versus community college, by math versus English, you know. So I think there are a lot of ways to split this.

And so I think you're making a good arrangement about the math sequence, the way it's structured right now.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: From my own experience, the way that Southern operates is that there's very little in the way of barriers to intro level classes even if you need a remedial class.

So I often have students that need -- it's called English 111, which is in essence the forerunner to the required English 112. They're -- they're still able to take all of my intro level 100 classes, and they often struggle, because I have a lot of writing, even in my intro level classes. But I will then send them for additional support or they can come see me during my office hours.

So I would actually say that the writing section is a bit different than the math section. I think it's pretty clear that math has a set of kind of definable blocks that you often have to have earlier blocks to be able to take the next block and to be able to understand it and use it correctly, whereas English, you can still learn the content of my course, even with deficient writing skills.

SENATOR BYE: Yes, yes. And I hear that argument.

I also say I know there's some pretty incredible programs at our community colleges that are teaching high-level algebra in the context of almost a trade training, and the students having a lot more success learning math that way as opposed to just in a class -- in a remedial class.

So, you know, I think, again, there are other ways to teach it, but I agree with you that math, there definitely -- feels to me more stackable than English, which is going on across the curriculum.

So you're now saying that a student who hasn't passed the Accuplacer and hasn't passed English -- the English remediation class can take an introductory political science class and is expected to --

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: To my knowledge, to my knowledge, yes.

SENATOR BYE: And is expected to write at the college level in that class.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: Yes.

It is -- I would assume that it's -- and I've never had this in my experience, but I would assume that you could have such a low score that maybe the English 111 is considered even too high, then you need additional remediation, and I'm not familiar if they have gateways or not.

But a good portion of ours -- our students do have to take the English 111, which is not -- it's the general ed credit. One hundred twelve is the gen ed credit for writing, and those students are regularly in

my classes, and they do struggle more, generally speaking, than the others, but they can complete the classes.

SENATOR BYE: Well, that's important information for us to have as well. So what you're saying is, it is not totally getting in their way of progressing --

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: No, it does not.

SENATOR BYE: -- their education. It slows them down because they're not getting the kind of credit they need to graduate from that English. But they're losing one class, not four classes.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: Exactly.

SENATOR BYE: If you will. So I think that's really important information that you bring to us today.

And I would just say, you know, you said "most" students, and then you changed it to "many" students don't take the advice.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: Yes. I wouldn't say probably most, but we really -- since I advice at least 20 to 25 students a semester in my department who are majors and I regularly advise them strongly to do certain things and they often ignore me.

SENATOR BYE: Right.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: And part of that is because they have -- there's financial reasons sometimes to do that, but more importantly there's generally scheduling reasons.

SENATOR BYE: And do you know how much it costs per credit at Southern?

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: That, I -- no, I actually don't. I believe that our tuition is currently about $4,000 a semester. And I know that once you're over 12 credits, up to 18 credits it's all the same price, so it's a --

If you're a full-time student, it's the same price whether you take 12 to 18 credits. I think it's about 4,000 a semester right now.

SENATOR BYE: So 4,000 a semester, so that's at least -- is that $1,000 a course? Seems like it's more --

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: It's probably a bit lower than that if you take five courses, which is the standard load.

SENATOR BYE: Five courses, okay.

But I don't know need to know the exact amount, but you could understand why a student might want to try a class that's a little bit too hard and work hard to pass if it saves him a year's earnings and also saves them taking and paying for another class, you know what I mean?

I think -- we haven't talked about the financial incentives until you brought it up, but these are -- a lot of them kids who are working a second job to pay for college, and so by saying you can't even try, we're saying you have to pay an extra X amount before you can make your way toward a degree.

So there are a lot of barriers, but that's probably another one to putting up a brick wall and saying, no way, no how, you can't try.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: I understand where -- I understand your position, but I think you can also look at it that there's sometimes that you should act in a protectionist way of a student's interest as well.

Are they -- in terms of trying to save money, right, and the student I think is more likely to think on that side of the ledger and underestimate the risks to themselves of taking the non-recommended class.

So you're going to end up with far more students in the non-recommended class who should be there, which actually leads them to a higher price when it's all done rather than a lower price.

And I think that you're more likely actually to have dropouts.

SENATOR BYE: Right.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: A lot of our students, if they get that F, it -- coming from where they come from, right, if you're a first-generation, you don't get the same kind of a support network --

I'm a first-generation college student, and I know my -- my mother and my father often had trouble really understanding what it was that I was doing inside of those institutions.

And if I had had an F or another low grade, I might have then acquiesced kind of to their informal pressure: What are you doing there? And I would have questioned myself.

So I -- I understand where you're coming from, and I think that there are potentially additional costs, but I think there might also be a savings for them and very protective of them in some sense.

SENATOR BYE: Right, okay.

Well, you know, what I would say if you had been in our district when they opened up AP to everyone, some of these arguments I'm hearing today sound so much like, well, we're saving the students from failing. We don't want the students to fail.

But if you looked at what students were being denied access to AP, it was the students whose parents didn't understand how important AP classes was. It was students who were low income, disproportionally; students of color, disproportionally.

So, you know, you're saying more are going to fail, because this test is so accurate that we know who's going to --

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: Well, I'm not trying to say that our placement exams couldn't be better. That -- obviously placements exams could have errors. Trying to be more accurate in that is a better thing.

SENATOR BYE: Right. We're weighing the accuracy of an exam versus the student's ability to understand if they think because they're in college they want to take a college class.

You know, I mean, it's just -- and it's -- and thank you for putting up with this, because this is just how -- I'm thinking out loud with you, you know?

But I think there was always this assumption, oh, we can't let these kids take AP because they won't pass. Well, you know what, some kids get a two on the exam. Some kids get a D. Some get a C. But the data is that kids who are taking AP -- even if they get a two -- are much more likely to go to and graduate college.

So yes, they weren't successful by traditional terms, maybe they didn't get an A in the class, maybe they didn't get a three on the exam, but having that challenging class and being in the context of a challenging class, even if they're not successful, and plenty are, leads -- has led to significantly better outcome, and it's why the AP of -- you know, the United States is really pressing schools to have open access against incredible pressures from high schools, even upper-middle-class high schools that split history three or four ways still and say, oh, these kids can't possibly take the top-level class because they'll interfere with the learning of the other students, when in fact my wife who teaches AP says thank goodness I have a mix of ability, because the top students are afraid to ask any questions because they never want to be wrong. It's the students who are just barely hanging on who are asking the questions that are helping me teach better.

So I -- you know, I think it's not always a

drag. Sometimes it can be a help to have different ability levels in a classroom.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: I don't disagree with you. And in my intro classes, I have a very wide range of students. I've had -- and that's actually one of the joys of the intro level classes, is that you have that wide range of abilities. And also, when you have a student that comes in highly deficient and you help them go on to success, it's an amazingly rewarding experience.

Again, coming back to kind of math, though, and I think math is very different -- and especially in my general field of political science -- is that if you don't, again, have certain fundamental building blocks, you -- it's almost impossible to succeed at the next level.

And we can debate whether college algebra is really needed for statistics or not, but I -- I do think that there's certain underlying mathematical skills that you have to have mastered before the next set of skills can be -- can be developed or built upon.

And the AP classes in terms of -- it's kind of a nice analogy in the sense that my intro level class should be open, and it is, but by the same token, there's a real quality control at the end of that class which is that exam, right, which determines if you get the AP credit or not.

SENATOR BYE: Yes, yes.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: Which is very different than other kinds of classes, and for me, that

also means there is a quality control agent at the end to ensure that everybody who gets college credit is -- has to go through and show that they've mastered the material.

SENATOR BYE: Right, but -- but I would say you -- I think our university professors are very good at assessing students and not just passing them through to pass them through.

If they're passing English 101 -- 110, they have earned it.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: I agree with that, but if you have a math class where you're having to teach the underlying building blocks, I think it's going to be very hard to given what the other students need at the same time.

SENATOR BYE: Yes. I hear you, and I think we'll take -- we'll definitely take that into account.

And I really appreciate your back-and-forth. I know how hard you're working with students, some students who come to you with great needs, and I think this is true of all of the professors today.

There are a lot of students showing up at your door unprepared, and you're making up a lot of ground in helping them -- helping them get to the point where they're going to be successful, and I think this Committee is just struggling with the sort of incredible data if we back up from the stories about student success once they enter remediation.

So, you know, I think we're all going to work together and get to a solution, and

certainly your testimony is going to help us, so thank you.

KEVIN BUTERBAUGH: Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: David Johnson -- Johnston.

DAVID JOHNSTON: Thank you. It's nice to be able to address my state senator formally instead of in church. It's good.

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I've just scrapped most of what I was going to say. You have my written testimony, and I've been listening carefully and taking a lot of notes, and this has been really instructive, you know, the dynamic tension between politics and pedagogy and it's all been good.

Just for the record, I'm now an independent educational consultant. I just retired from the Casey Foundation after ten years of working with foster youth on their life skills learning.

I was in charge of that for all of New England, and I did a lot of work in higher education and ran a statewide committee that was basically about the retention of foster youth on campuses. We worked with several campuses, including Southern, as pilot models.

So I don't pretend to be an expert on education, although I've learned that I do know a lot about it, and so I'm trying to apply my experience to access and success issues.

Just for your information, Senator Bye, as you know, I have some funding from Casey to

put on a conference that we're tentatively calling Retention to Graduation that we're going to do at Goodwin, day-long statewide conference. There will be a number of people, including a couple of people here, who will be sitting on the planning committee for that, so it's all related to, I think, this.

And I think my comments on the three bills, I came in with strong support for them. I hear the caveats and the warnings, and I think we have to take those into account.

The dialogue with the act and omissions has an been great. I love the sound of what they're doing at Eastern. I think there are ways to back up and provide support services. And this is a lot of what I was doing around life skills learning and non-academic supports to support the ability of learners to be academically successful as well.

And if we can do those, there are money issues, and I'm concerned about perception of unfunded mandates and so on with these kinds of bills, but I think we need to do the alignment. We've got to do better assessment. We have to start earlier.

I have a daughter who is a first grade teacher in New York City and who is a literacy specialist, and we've sat and talked about achievement gap and all of these issues all the way through, and, you know, she can see them starting at that level.

So it's a long-term problem. Short-term, our academic institutions have to deal with

whatever achievement gap they inherit, and I think that's what we're talking about.

And I think the remedial issues, I've seen some good models both in Connecticut and around the country, and I'm actually off to a national conference of the National Center for First-Year Experience tomorrow morning out in San Antonio, and there are some great models where community colleges have built remedial education into non-class support but supporting class, I think a little bit along the lines that Professor -- I forget the name -- from Eastern was talking about.

And I think we need to do more of that. I just think these bills force us to experiment. I'm not sure you require it on every campus. Maybe we start with -- with two and -- but try it at scale on those campuses. I think there are ways to do that.

I think it's just time, given those -- those bleak statistics, everything else notwithstanding, it's time to take some risks and get on with this work.

So thank you for -- for pushing this, and I hope to be a player at some level in all of this work.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you, David. And thank you for all the volunteer time you've been putting in on these issues and helping foster youth.

REP. WILLIS: That was very helpful. That was very helpful insight. It's nice to -- oh, Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Madam Chair, I would also

recognize the terrific work that the Casey Foundation has done in this area particularly and its concern about our children and its -- their education. It's really outstanding and nationally well recognized.

So thank you for your work in that regard.

A VOICE: (Inaudible).

REP. WILLIS: Thank you again. Leon Brin. Good afternoon.

LEON BRIN: Good afternoon.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you for your patience and waiting, but it has been a very educational experience, as everyone has said, so...

LEON BRIN: I'm also going to scrap most of what I prepared except the beginning.

Senator Bye, Representative Willis and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify about Senate Bill 40, An Act Concerning Open Access to College Level Courses.

My name is Leon Brin. I'm a professor at the Department of Mathematics at Southern Connecticut State University. I'm also the assistant chair of the department.

And so what I'd like to do is just make a couple of comments, basically responding to some of the questions that you've asked already, so I'll just -- and I want to correct my colleague's quotation of the numbers and percentage of students who -- who placed into remedial mathematics at

Southern. It's actually about twice as bad as he said.

So let me just skip right to that. In a -- in the fall of 2001, we -- our freshman cohort of 1,319 students, we have 503 of them, that's 38 percent, slightly more than 38 percent of them who scored less than a 450 on the math SAT.

And as you heard before, that's below the national average, and these are students who truly need remedial work of some sort. And so these are the students who have placed into Math 95, which is entitled Elementary Algebra.

And if we also consider our -- our intermediate algebra classes, which are Math 100 and 102 that you heard about earlier, it's actually more like 81 percent of our incoming freshmen who need to take those courses.

And if those are all considered remedial, then I'm left wondering what are we supposed to do with 81 percent of our incoming freshmen if we're not allowed to required remedial classes?

We are certainly not ready to do things like -- even the other things that our universities are -- are already doing. We don't have those things in place. What we would find is a flood of students who are not ready for the courses that they end up in. And that's largely because --

The notion that our students will choose to take remedial classes based on a recommendation is very optimistic. It will

not be only those who are truly motivated and interested that -- in giving college-level math a try but opt out of remediation, it would be nearly all students.

I'm going to go back to the comment that I believe it was Dr. Buterbaugh made and say that it would be almost everyone. It wouldn't be just many. It would be almost all of them. And of course the motivations are the obvious ones

Math 95 is a non-credit-bearing course, and it's -- and it costs money, and it slows down the progress in the eyes of the students.
And so once they catch wind of the fact that they don't actually have to take the class, they won't. I mean, this is -- I know -- well, okay. That's enough of that.

And then let me get back to -- okay. So the question of why not let them try and how bad are students who are admitted, I think -- I think I've already given a little bit of background on that.

And my addendum to my testimony gives you a little bit more detail about just how bad some of the students are, how poorly prepared they are for mathematics.

You'll see that about 50 students who were admitted in the fall actually got less than a 350 on the SAT.

So we're talking about students who -- who lack simple arithmetic skills. We're talking about students who when you ask them to add six plus two, they take out a

calculator, and that's not a joke. This I've seen. We have many instances of this.

And to think that they can jump into math, you know, a college math course is just in -- is not -- is more than optimistic. It's just not reasonable.

So why not let them try? Because the population that we're talking about is exactly the population that's not mature enough to make the right decision. These people are so poorly prepared and, for lack of a better term, clueless about really what it takes to take college-level classes that they will choose to take them despite fact that it will in the end be worse for them.

So that's my -- that's my response to why not let them try and how bad are they really. Despite the fact that they've gone through an application process, graduated high school and taken an SAT, we still end up with students who you would not believe actually went through all that.

So I thank you for the time to express my opinion today, and I'll be happy to address any questions if you have any.

REP. WILLIS: I do. Obviously we are here today because we feel that the learning support that we're providing is not working as it should. Too many students have -- are not making the grade.

I have a question for you. Looking at the math SAT scores on the chart you provided on the back of your testimony, where would you say -- would you say that all the students that fit into 240 to 390 need remediation --

LEON BRIN: Actually, we require --

REP. WILLIS: -- or is it mixed?

LEON BRIN: -- remediation for everyone up to scoring 440, so...

REP. WILLIS: 440?

LEON BRIN: Yes. Anything below a 450 and they're required to take Math 95. That's where the number 503 comes from. If you add up all the students who scored less than 450, you'll get less than 503.

REP. WILLIS: Okay.

LEON BRIN: And that by any measure is a remedial course. Now, I have some question of whether or not 100 and 102 would also be remedial. That's where the 81 percent came from, if you include those students who score I believe up to -- I believe it's up to a 500, starting out 500, adds up to 500, that's where they come from.

REP. WILLIS: So in actuality, you're not really doing a -- an assessment at that point. You're just saying anybody below 450 is required to take the remedial math?

LEON BRIN: That's correct. That's our placement scheme. That doesn't -- that's not quite as hard and fast as it may sound, because we have a couple of -- of ways that students who are motivated and truly maybe are ready for college math can get around that placement, one of them being a voluntary summer experience with ALEX, which is a computer-based learning system, who take

that, and then subsequently take a math placement test, they can place out.

And even without taking the ALEX summer course, we do allow students who really believe that they don't belong in the course that they were placed into to take another placement test and to prove to us that -- that the SAT score is not reflective of their ability, and so they do have that opportunity, and so it --

It's not, like I said, not quite as hard and fast as all that.

REP. WILLIS: Let's say if I scored 490 --

LEON BRIN: Yes.

REP. WILLIS: -- and I could ask you to waive the remedial course or --

LEON BRIN: Well, yes. Certainly we allow -- we have lots of students who ask that, and the response is they should take a placement test. And if they score better on the placement test than the SAT score said, then we let them in.

REP. WILLIS: How does this correlate with their high school grades? I mean, do you look at transcripts?

As Senator Bye said before, the student that took calculus but wasn't allowed to take entry-level math?

LEON BRIN: Well, we to take, as I'm sure you're aware now, we do take AP credit. So if somebody has taken AP calculus and we -- and they have done well on it, we certainly

accept that.

But we don't did and look at the transcripts and say, oh, this person was in an AP calculus class so I guess we won't require remedial regardless of the SAT.

It's just the SAT score that we look at and original placement, plus what would be, I suppose, considered transcript credit from their high school through AP test.

REP. WILLIS: Obviously we have a lot of work to do here. Certainly the -- all the reforms that -- in the core curriculum that's going to be implemented hopefully will reduce the pipeline that we're seeing in our state universities.

Obviously very disappointing to sit here and realize the number of students that are showing up at I think fine higher education institutions in Connecticut. And I -- 71 percent, 60 percent on remediation. So...

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE: Let me -- thank you for your testimony. It's actually really instructive for us.

LEON BRIN: Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: What percentage of the math classes offered at Southern -- you're at Southern, right, just want to make sure --are remedial classes?

So what percentage -- if you've been department chair -- I'm trying to get a

sense of how much of the body of work in the math department, how many people are teaching remedial classes.

LEON BRIN: I'm the assistant chair.

SENATOR BYE: Oh.

LEON BRIN: But I am actually in charge of the scheduling, so I happen to know roughly the numbers, and so I think -- I'm not exactly sure which numbers you're looking for here. I can give you two different ones.

SENATOR BYE: So what proportions of the math classes offered are those remedial classes?

LEON BRIN: What portions of the sections -- so in the fall, we offer approximately about 20 sections of math 95, which is undeniably remedial, and about 40 sections of the 100 and 102, maybe 45 between the two of them.

SENATOR BYE: And are those remedial? Do those count towards degree or --

LEON BRIN: Well, that's a question to me -- maybe I should ask you if they're remedial. They do -- they do carry college credit. Does that make them not remedial?

SENATOR BYE: But do they count toward a --

Well, because, like, one of the things we're learning in terms of the financing of all of this is that the only ones losing are the students, because the universities and community colleges are not losing money. They're charging for credit.

LEON BRIN: Mm-hmm.

SENATOR BYE: So they call it a credit, but it's not a credit that's moving a student toward a degree.

LEON BRIN: Well, it's a credit that moves a student toward a degree in the sense that they have to accrue a total of 120 or so credits.

SENATOR BYE: Okay, okay.

LEON BRIN: And it does count toward that total, but it doesn't count toward anything else. So, for example, it doesn't get them through any of the --

SENATOR BYE: Doesn't count as a major requirement?

LEON BRIN: Not a major requirement. All it is -- all it does is it satisfies a prerequisite to get into what we call the general education classes.

SENATOR BYE: Oh, so it's a prerequisite.

LEON BRIN: Which those -- it's -- it's a prerequisite in the sense that you do need it to get in there, but it -- it's not a typical prerequisite like we call Calculus II a prerequisite for Calculus III. Calculus II is a prerequisite, but it also.

SENATOR BYE: Counts.

LEON BRIN: -- satisfies some other requirements for the degree. These classes are prerequisite, but they don't satisfy anything else.

SENATOR BYE: They're not progressing students --

LEON BRIN: They're not progressing students in any other way.

SENATOR BYE: So you have 60 -- between 95, 100 and 102, you have 60. And then how many classes are offered that aren't remedial?

LEON BRIN: It was -- the total was just under 140, so that would be 75 or so, 75 or 80, something like that.

SENATOR BYE: So what's that? You're the mathematician, 40 percent.

LEON BRIN: It's less than 50 percent that are --

SENATOR BYE: But it's --

LEON BRIN: -- not remedial.

SENATOR BYE: But it's approaching 50 percent --

LEON BRIN: Right.

SENATOR BYE: -- of all the classes that are taught --

LEON BRIN: That's right.

SENATOR BYE: -- at a state university --

LEON BRIN: That's right.

SENATOR BYE: So there's a lot -- that's a lot of students and a lot of credits.

LEON BRIN: That's right.

SENATOR BYE: And students are spending a lot of money on these classes.

LEON BRIN: That's right.

SENATOR BYE: That's staggering how many -- how many that is.

LEON BRIN: It is. And so just to, I think, finish, maybe answering another part of your question was that most of those classes are taught by adjuncts. They're not taught by full-time faculty.

So we do have a few faculty -- full-time faculty participating in teaching those classes; but by and large, over 90 percent of them are taught by adjuncts, which I guess does address another question that somebody had earlier, many of whom have taught at the high school, many of whom are in education outside of othe university, have experience with high school students.

SENATOR BYE: Yes. No, I wasn't getting at, like the quality of the teachers, but that's still interesting.

I was getting at of sort of the math portfolio at our CSUs, 40 percent or so are remedial -- are classes that are remedial. Out of all the sections offered period, 40 percent are remedial classes, are not moving students toward --

LEON BRIN: Right.

SENATOR BYE: -- a degree.

So, I mean, I think the -- what you're touching on, and I think what the research is bearing out, even the high school reform research, is how important having those math

skills and analytical skills are for college success.

LEON BRIN: I agree 100 percent.

SENATOR BYE: And so you're math teacher, you're not going to disagree with me -- and I wish I had the CSU numbers, and I would ask the folks from the Board of Regents, they're going to get them to me, but math is such a good predictor of graduation rates in the community college.

So if the student starts in the lower-level math remediation in community college, only four percent of those students are graduating from community college in three years.

So it really is a -- a marker for who's going to be successful, you know, so I just want to make that point. It's really quite something. It's -- you know, in the high school reform I've heard things about how important algebra is and that sort of thing; but listening to Representative Willis about the SATs, listening to your testimony and then looking at the stark graph on the -- related to the community college success, I think we've got to pay really close attention to math skills starting when kids are really young and building on those as they're going through the system.

So I thank you for your -- for your input, and I do think, you know, we're going to think about math a little bit differently as we look at this legislation, so...

Thanks for your patience, too.

LEON BRIN: Thank you.

REP. WILLIS: Goes back to what you've been saying, Senator Bye, college starts in pre-K.

SENATOR BYE: Preschool.

REP. WILLIS: Preschool.

Oh, Professor Brin? There's a question. I wasn't looking to my left.

REP. JANOWSKI: Just a quick question. I apologize for not being here earlier and listening to all your presentation. I was chairing another committee that just got done.

But I did catch that you were talking about prerequisite courses, and how frequently are prerequisite courses used in the same context as remedial courses? Because they aren't, in my opinion, different.

LEON BRIN: Well, I was trying to make a distinction between two different kinds of prerequisite courses. I think that might have been what you heard.

So there -- there are -- there are several different class -- courses at Southern which might be considered remedial, and I was actually asking the question whether you would consider them remedial.

So one of them is Math 95, which I don't think anyone on the planet would consider not remedial. This is -- these are remedial classes that people -- because it's talking about high school, almost pre-algebra skills. And my question was about the next level up, for example, is Math 100 and 102,

which are called intermediate algebra.

Now, these are prerequisite courses for people who don't place out of them. So people with SAT scores high enough don't have to take these courses. They place right into what you would consider college-level math courses, okay?

So people who place into these courses have to take them as a prerequisite to getting in the college-level math classes, and -- and -- because that's what's listed in the bulletin as the prerequisite, okay?

Math 95 comes before those two, so it's not a -- it's not considered a prerequisite for those classes. It's a pre-prerequisite, if you will.

And so my question was, just because it bears credit, the 100 and the 102 bear credit toward a degree, does that automatically make them non-remedial? I would argue no.

I mean, this is still high school algebra that we're talking about here, and the credit that they're getting, the only thing that it does is it gives them credits toward the 120 or 130 total that they need to graduate. It doesn't progress them through any of their major programs. It doesn't get them through the general education requirements. It does nothing except give them three credits toward graduation.

REP. JANOWSKI: And just another follow-up question, and I hope I'm not -- you're not repeating something that you might have already said.

How does one determine, for example -- how would you determine if someone needs remediation, a remediation course in math or any other subject?

LEON BRIN: We do our placement strictly -- in the math department strictly through SAT math scores. We found that there's very little difference between doing that and doing Accuplacer or any other electronic placement testing.

And numbers and groups of students who place into the various levels is almost identical regardless.

REP. JANOWSKI: Okay. So you use SAT scores?

LEON BRIN: That's correct.

REP. JANOWSKI: Okay.

Do you use those SAT scores with students coming out of high school as well as adults going back to college?

LEON BRIN: Generally speaking, people who already have some college experience, we just take the transfer credits and whatever they've done previously, and we allow them to take subsequent courses. We don't -- we don't look at their SAT scores.

It's only the people coming straight out of high school that we place that way.

REP. JANOWSKI: Okay.

Well, maybe that's what I was getting at. Because sometimes an adult learner -- and

when I say an "adult learner," I'm talking about someone who might be a few years beyond high school --

LEON BRIN: Right.

REP. JANOWSKI: -- or in their 30s.

LEON BRIN: (Inaudible.)

REP. JANOWSKI: They may not have gone to college at all.

LEON BRIN: Right.

REP. JANOWSKI: So they're going back to the community college with no college credits whatsoever.

REP. JANOWSKI: And, you know, have been out of high school for quite some time. And those students tend to do very well regardless of how long they have been out of high school because they want to be there, number one, and they want to be successful.

So those individuals are not measured by SAT scores, is what you're telling me?

LEON BRIN: It depends, I suppose, on how recent their SAT score is. I -- I'll be honest with you, I'm not the placement coordinator. I don't know for certain, but I know that returning students can be recommended that they take placement tests in lieu of using their SAT score for placement.

REP. JANOWSKI: And the reason I mention that is because I -- I have roots at the community college level, and I can recall a number of young adults, 25, 30, who decided they were

going to go back to -- to get their degree.

They came out of high school with a general studies program. They lacked or didn't have other than general math background. They were required to take certain prerequisites in order to receive a degree program or a transfer to another university. And often what I saw happening was that there were prerequisites, especially for math.

I can recall -- let's say someone was taking calculus or trigonometry or statistics. There were prerequisites. You have to have two years of algebra, and you had to take those two years at the college level before taking the individual math course.

And I saw a number of students who decided not to ask anybody but simply take the -- one of the prerequisites. And if they did well, as most of them that I can remember did, they would simply ignore the second prerequisite, take the course with just one exposure to the -- to, let's say, the algebra course, ace it.

So I'm not sure if we're building hurdles in a way. I mean, if those students could do it and they had been away from their high school achievements for some time and had been in general courses, not college courses, I don't know why -- and with some tutoring, some of these students did get individual tutoring, by the way, to be able to do well in the algebra course and then proceed on.

Is there anything being done, any suggestions for students to get tutoring?

LEON BRIN: Yes, we have a math tutoring center that's open, I believe it's somewhere around 40 hours a week, and anybody who wants to get tutoring in lower-level classes -- basically all of our introductory classes and remedial classes can go at any time and get tutoring, and that's -- that's free to the students.

So that's available, and -- well, I guess that answers your question.

REP. JANOWSKI: Okay, you did. You answered my question. Thank you very much.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you. Peter Denegre, Tunxis.

We're getting there.

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PETER DENEGRE: Yes. Thank you for letting me bring to you some stories from my students.

My name is Peter Denegre. I'm a professor of English -- of developmental English at Tunxis Community College. I've been there for about four years now. I teach developmental, because I believe that -- I believe in trying to --

I'm sorry, I changed my -- after all that's been said, I've kind of changed what I was about to say. But I'd like to bring to you -- I know. I had everything written out and prepared, but a lot of these arguments have already been stated, so I don't want to restate them.

But what I do -- what I don't hear right now is I don't hear our students and our student voices, and I could bring some of those voices to you, if I may have that honor.

I -- as I said, I teach developmental, so at Tunxis. We have two levels, and I can only speak for the English sequences of classes.

And we have an Integrated I, an Integrated II, and then they pass on to Composition.

Some students have to take I. Some have to take -- I mean a I and then II, and then there's one course that's only three credits that's Intro to College Reading and Writing.

So these students are placed into these courses by Accuplacer. When I work with students from Integrated I, some of them don't -- aren't able to even put a sentence together, never mind ideas, never mind a paragraph. And so by placing them in Composition, I just don't see them succeeding.

And we are all here because we want our students to succeed, and I comment that this -- there's actually someone speaking to -- addressing these issues, because these issues do have to be addressed, I agree, and I do -- I'm concerned about our students paying this money for developmental education.

However, I don't think we can just sort of pass it and just say that they can just go on to a course without having any foundations. It's like building a house without a foundation. It might stand up for a little bit, but I think it might fall also.

But hear are some problems that I think about. I don't necessarily think it's the

failure of a student. I don't think it's necessarily the failure of the sequence of classes. I don't think developmental education is at fault. What I might think is maybe at fault is what we don't help our students with.

I've had students who don't come to class because they don't have the bus fare to get to Tunxis. I've had students who can't attend my class because they have daycare issues. My student just called me yesterday. She's not coming in. Her daughter had to go to the emergency room.

I've got students who take care of sick parents. I've got students who work two jobs and have to -- and sometimes can't work a work schedule into a school schedule. Is that why these students are failing? It's not because they can't do the work, but because they have problems outside of school?

And so what is success rate? Our mission at Tunxis is to give an affordable education and to create a workforce. Some people come in, and they come in for one class, Public Speaking, and that's it. If these people represent our passing rate, well, that may not be success to you, but it's success to me that a businessman can come, take a public speaking class and not graduate but be better at his -- be better at what he does.

So I think what's lacking here is we wonder about failure. But what are we failing at? Are we failing at our education or are we failing at securing a safety net for our students? And I'd just like to bring that

up to you.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you very much. Questions or comments? Yes, Representative LeGeyt.

REP. LeGEYT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks for your comments today.

PETER DENEGRE: You're welcome.

REP. LeGEYT: A student in K-12 is constitutionally mandated to receive a free and appropriate education. The -- that creates some set of -- some sort of a weakness for higher ed., public institutions, private institutions, that aren't constitutionally mandated to provide an education to somebody.

So when people present -- and I respect your consideration of all the different situations that your students present to you and are clearly stuck in dealing with, but without the constitutional mandate, we have to decide where to draw the line.

PETER DENEGRE: Mm-hmm.

REP. LeGEYT: You know, we can't remedy every single life situation that impacts a student's ability to learn, attend, succeed. And I -- I don't say that out of a lack of respect for what you do. I don't say that out of a lack of respect for the students. But without that constitutional mandate, we have to -- we have to draw a line. And many times that line is determined by funding levels and so forth.

A lot of what we've talked about today -- and I know you've been sitting here

listening to it, and I appreciate that -- is about the transition from high school to college and the -- the lessening of the supervisory and -- nature of what college does versus high school and the -- the lessening of the safety net, so to speak, that occur, you know, those are situations of life.

PETER DENEGRE: To some, sir, but not to all. Excuse me. I think for the wealthy, it's very easy to go to school and to afford it. For the poor, it's much more difficult.

REP. LeGEYT: That's a situation of life as well, and so those things impact.

But I think that, you know, we have to draw the line somewhere. We can't help every single person succeed. So when it comes to deciding the structure and nature of our remedial and developmental classes, it's a tough -- it's a tough process.

And I appreciate you for coming and sharing those concerns with us.

PETER DENEGRE: Thank you.

Yes, I speak for those who are disenfranchised, those who are poor, those who are either people of color -- these are most of the students who represent my classrooms. And so I think we're turning our backs on them, to be honest with you. We're not extending a hand.

Do we really care about the poor if we just cut out their educational programs so they have nothing to do? I'm a little shocked that there's no concern for them.

REP. LeGEYT: And I would respectfully disagree that that's what I meant. I simply mean that without that constitutional mandate, we have to draw a line. It doesn't mean that we exclude every poor person. Doesn't mean that we, you know, make any judgments based on other discriminating factors.

It simply means that we can't satisfy everyone's needs. That's -- and that's a -- that's a frustration of government in general. There's more need than the government can manage to correct. It's just -- it's just a function of life, I think.

So thank you.

PETER DENEGRE: Questions?

REP. WILLIS: I'm sorry. Senator Bye, and then I have -- sorry.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you so much for coming, and I know --

PETER DENEGRE: Thank you for listening to me.

SENATOR BYE: -- the work that goes on at Tunxis, a lot of students from many parts of my district go to Tunxis, some in remedial care, some are public schools, and you guys are having to do yeoman's work making up for it.

I want to go to your question about, you know, so what's the impact of remedial education even if kids don't graduate, which was sort of a point you made, is we need to think about that.

So my question is -- because the data we get is very focused on graduation rates. You know, if you follow this Committee, you'll see we're obsessed with graduation rates, because, you know, that's what we know is linked to getting a different job with a different level of pay, taking that next step up and even as a state how we define ourselves.

Connecticut defines itself as one of the most highly educated states in the country. A lot of graduate degrees, a lot of bachelor's degrees, a lot of associate's degrees, so we see that as critical for our economic success.

But do you know any data that shows students who pass remedial classes are doing better in their or better --

PETER DENEGRE: Yes, ma'am, we actually have --

SENATOR BYE: Great, that's excellent.

PETER DENEGRE: We actually have that information, and we can send that to you.

SENATOR BYE: So what are some of the outcomes just in a --

PETER DENEGRE: Students -- okay. On average, if a student places in Composition, I believe it's 60 percent is the passing grade.

If students go through our developmental classes -- and just one thing, case in point.

Developmental versus remedial, we believe in

developmental education, meaning that -- remedial is more like there's a -- a deficit that we need to fill in.

Developmental means that they're developing, that they need certain skills and it's a foundation and keep building upon that. So we develop our students.

When they go through our developmental sequences, about 57 percent pass Composition. So it's -- it's pretty much on par. It's a little bit less, but mostly --

SENATOR BYE: No, that's very close.

PETER DENEGRE: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: Now, I know there are some people I talked to from certain community colleges that don't say you can't, that allow students to try.

Do you have any way that at Tunxis if a student tests in remedial --

PETER DENEGRE: Yes, we --

SENATOR BYE: -- that they can try and what their success rates -- because our guys are very data-driven.

PETER DENEGRE: Me personally, there are some students who will take a course, like Integrated Reading and Writing II -- excuse me, Integrated Reading and Writing I.

Some we feel don't need as much work, so they can go to a three-credit course rather than a six-credit course.

We do also have a function that if students really are adamant about taking Composition and don't want to take a remedial, we will actually have them take a written test again, and we can make that judgment. So we are a little more flexible.

And if a student were to say -- come into my Composition class and say I can do this, I'm -- I shouldn't be one to say, no, you can't do it. However, I do know some of the skills, and I do know that usually the majority of students will fail.

Yes, there are some cases where students will absolutely through motivation and through a lot of help will make it, absolutely. But how many of those are those, you know?

One size doesn't fit all, and I think sometimes you have to be very careful that we assume that one size fits all.

SENATOR BYE: Absolutely. I agree with you.

And sort of my whole point with this bill is that one size doesn't fit all, that the Accuplacer doesn't fit everyone.

And with our current system, students going in a community college to take even one remedial class, their chances of graduating are less than eight percent.

So, you know, in my head, I'm saying, well, are the chances of them -- rather than slowing them down, are their chances of passing that class without remediation eight percent or better? Because if they are, I'm willing to let those students that want to

try.

Because right now, 92 percent aren't making their way to graduation in three years.

PETER DENEGRE: Right.

SENATOR BYE: So, you know, we're dealing with data, and we're also dealing with data about remedial courses cost students money.

PETER DENEGRE: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: They're using their Pell Grants.

PETER DENEGRE: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: We have -- student loan debt is higher than credit card debt right now in the United States. It's pretty much approaching the mortgage crisis.

So I think as a legislator, it's, like, incumbent upon us to make sure that if we're asking students to pay more money for eight percent or less success to take this class, we need to wonder if there aren't other options, which you've heard -- you've heard today.

PETER DENEGRE: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: But I just think we keep acting -- not you, but I'd say --

PETER DENEGRE: That's fine.

SENATOR BYE: -- overall like this current system, we absolutely need it, because students will fail if we don't have this system. But 92 percent of students are failing with the

current system.

I know you and I would dis -- well, we'd probably agree that just taking a class means you're not failing, that you're going to do better ultimately, because every class helps you cognitively and will help you be successful.

PETER DENEGRE: Absolutely. Developmental. I think every -- all of education is developmental, to be honest.

SENATOR BYE: It is. But if you have any data to show that, you know, students who don't graduate but they take developmental classes are doing better in ways X, Y and Z out there in the world, we are really happy to hear that.

We're so hyperfocused on graduation rates, because that's a metric that we know leads to improved lives for -- and community college, often students who are the first to go to college, trying to make their way out of poverty. I think our responsibility to these students is greater than students who would have access 100 other ways.

PETER DENEGRE: Well --

SENATOR BYE: So know that all of us are really concerned about students in the community college and wanting them to have success.

PETER DENEGRE: Well, you know, we are under -- underfunded and understaffed. We don't have enough counselors. We don't have advisors. We don't have enough professors.

So to get back to case in point, what about

hiring more professors, more -- more social workers? There could be a safety net. I do believe that we could help more people, but we don't. I don't think we put the money in the right place.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you for being such a wonderful advocate and -- for your students.

PETER DENEGRE: You're welcome. I think they'll thank me, too.

REP. WILLIS: And for us, this really is about ensuring students --

PETER DENEGRE: Yes.

REP. WILLIS: That everyone has the opportunity. And success, I do want to make a comment about graduation rates with community colleges. I have a real issue with that, because I think that's the wrong bar. And -- and the numbers are skewed, and we can't --

PETER DENEGRE: Yes.

REP. WILLIS: -- track students right now, and they may take a couple of courses with you and transfer somewhere else --

PETER DENEGRE: That's exactly it.

REP. WILLIS: -- and they -- they come out as being not successful when, in fact, the community college got them on the road.

So I just want to say that, and I do want to say to you that we care deeply about all of our students and we want them all to be successful. That's why we're here today.

We don't want to hear that there's a system in place that doesn't give them a helping hand. And then if we need to fix it, then we should. And if we have to make people fix it, then we will.

PETER DENEGRE: That sounds good, ma'am.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you very much.

PETER DENEGRE: Thank you. More than happy to oblige.

REP. JANOWSKI: Thank you.

Just a quick question. Your focus is on what you term as developmental education --

PETER DENEGRE: Yes, ma'am.

REP. JANOWSKI: -- which is right, because the term itself is positive.

PETER DENEGRE: That's exactly --

REP. JANOWSKI: Implies growth.

PETER DENEGRE: Yes, ma'am.

REP. JANOWSKI: Remedial, I've always hated that term, remedial, even at the high school level.

PETER DENEGRE: Many of us are excited by it.

REP. JANOWSKI: Well, it implies failure.

PETER DENEGRE: It does. It also implies that you didn't learn or you're stupid. And it's not necessarily that that's the case. Maybe

there wasn't a good suit between teacher and student, you know? There are a lot of factors here.

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt.

REP. JANOWSKI: So -- so I appreciate that.

And that labeling itself, that more positive labeling, may have something to do with the motivation of your students to move ahead and apply themselves a lot stronger than they normally would.

PETER DENEGRE: Yes.

REP. JANOWSKI: So I would see it as a motivator.

PETER DENEGRE: It does work that way.

REP. JANOWSKI: So my question to you is, because motivation is extremely important and sometimes it needs a little helping hand, how do you not rate your students when they do require the developmental education courses so that they eventually learn to learn on their own?

PETER DENEGRE: Yes.

REP. JANOWSKI: Because ultimately, that's the goal.

PETER DENEGRE: Absolutely. It's a very good question.

We're piloting a program. We, too are trying to do innovative things at Tunxis Community College. My colleague and I are teaching the lowest level or the -- I should say the beginning level, Integrated I.

What we're incorporating is life skills to it. I'm teaching The Alchemist. I don't know if you know about that. It's about a young man who's on a journey to find his treasure, and all -- what impedes him and still he keeps on going.

And so we talk to students about goals, setting goals, what impedes a goal, what are some of the problems. And so we do try to face that.

We also have a program called FYE, many schools have this, first-year experience, where they try to teach students different skills of time management of studying, notetaking, setting goals. So there are some things in place, although this is not a required course. So unfortunately, students usually don't do optional, so they won't usually take this course, even though some will -- many will benefit from it.

REP. JANOWSKI: Well, I appreciate that, because goals that they can refer to and cross off once they've achieved them, no matter how small they are --

PETER DENEGRE: I agree. Doing homework.

REP. JANOWSKI: Exactly. And time management, huge, huge --

PETER DENEGRE: Yes, ma'am.

REP. JANOWSKI: -- in self-motivating your own successes. Those are very key factors, and I'm pleased to hear that that is part of your emphasis.

PETER DENEGRE: Yes, it is.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you. Thank you very much.

PETER DENEGRE: Pleasure is mine.

REP. WILLIS: Steve Cohen. Long time no see.

MR. COHEN: Just a couple of days.

REP. WILLIS: And you had to sit here and look at me all day two days in a row.

MR. COHEN: The pleasure is mine. You know that. Good --

REP. WILLIS: Do we have testimony from you, Steve?

MR. COHEN: I'm sorry?

REP. WILLIS: Oh, we don't have testimony?

MR. COHEN: I don't have testimony --

REP. WILLIS: Okay.

MR. COHEN: -- that's written, and even if I did, what use would it be?

I'll start with the little bit that I had prepared, and like virtually all of my predecessors, I'm going to toss aside all the rest.

SB40

So I will say good afternoon, Co-Chairs Willis and Bye and other members of the Committee. My name is Steve Cohen. I've been on the faculty at Norwalk Community College since 1988. I teach developmental English and Reading, and I'm also president of the Congress of Connecticut Community

Colleges.

I've heard all sorts of interesting things today, and let me thank the Committee for bringing up this topic and causing us to have the conversation, because having the conversation I think has been beneficial for all of us.

Representative Willis, you just touched on something that I was going to say, so I'll reinforce it a little bit, and that is that graduation rates are at best an imperfect measure in the community colleges of the effectiveness of what we do, and it doesn't matter whether we're talking about developmental students or just the students who come to us in general.

I'm reminded of a student I had in our lowest level of developmental coursework, a six-credit foundations of reading and writing course, who came in because she wanted to have a job with Metro-North Railroad as a secretary, and we understood that she needed to have some word processing skills in order to get that job. And so she came to Norwalk Community College to take a course in those skills.

And she took the Accuplacer and ended up in my English class, and it just so happened that I taught in a computer classroom. We did our paperwork electronically, and I happened to teach her some Word. So she got called for her job interview, and she proved that she knew enough Word, she got hire. I didn't know this at the time. She just disappeared from class.

So I called her up. I said what happened?

You've been doing so well, where are you? She said oh, I just got my job, thank you so much, I'm on my way.

I had another student in my English 102, obviously -- a nondevelopmental class --

REP. WILLIS: I hope you now get a pass on Metro.

MR. COHEN: I'm sorry?

REP. WILLIS: I hope you now get a pass.

MR. COHEN: Well, I'm on the road a lot but generally not on the train, so...

But another student I had in English 102 just this past spring, obviously not a developmental course, a written comp class, and I looked at him as he entered; he looked at me. I said I know you. He said, yeah, I know you, too.

I had him in a developmental writing course almost 20 years earlier, okay? And he had moved out of state, gone down to Florida, be with family. He had eventually gone in the military. He had gone through that experience.

He had then gone on to college down there, done what he needed to do. Then he relocated back to Norwalk, and here he is finishing his degree finally --

You know, he's part of that, you know, 98 percent right now who looks like he's a failure, but if we looked at this, at the statistics longitudinally, I know 20 years is a really long time to look longitudinally, but eventually he's going to

get a degree.

And so degrees by themselves are important measures of students' success. I think they're not the only measure of student success.

And what we don't do, I think, as a system very well is look at what our students' goals are and try to then assess what they ought to be and see how we're meeting those.

In terms of some of the other things I heard today, very quickly, English 100Plus at Eastern is really interesting. And quickly, I used to work at Eastern many, many moons ago before I came to the community colleges, so I can't help but toss in a bit of shameless self-promotion, forgive me.

Dr. Malenczyk, if I'm pronouncing her name correctly, pointed out she used peer tutors in that course. And I developed the peer tutoring program that they have there that allows students to work for credit.

We've used peer tutors in courses at Norwalk. It's harder in the community college. Obviously we don't have upper-division courses. We don't have students around as long, perhaps, as students in the four years have them for.

And so we have some issues, but that's worth exploring. We developed these longitudinal courses over time in response to what we saw students need. We didn't do it to hinder anybody. We did it to help people.

And so to the extent that we can think differently about how to help people, that's

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a wonderful thing. And you're causing us to do that. Obviously, that's great.

I guess the only other thing that I would -- I would say very, very quickly in response to all of this is that in what we're trying to do, the student is the driver. Focusing on the need of the student and trying to figure out how best to meet that need.

Representative LeGeyt, you focused in some of your early remarks on motivation. And I think very much about motivation. I personally would much rather have a student with weak skill with high motivation than the opposite kind of student.

And so to the extent that we may be causing ourselves some injury, it would be perhaps worth thinking about -- not necessarily saying to the student you can take whatever English or whatever math you want regardless of your placement test score, but rather if you want to be an accountant or if you want to be a police officer, maybe you should take an intro criminal justice course or an intro business course regardless of what your placement test scores are in English and math.

Maybe that's the way to think about this for us, and that's something that should be explored.

So with that, I will pretend I never had prepared remarks and leave it to you if you have any questions for me, and I thank you for your time and attention.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you, Steve. Good to have you here. What are you doing tomorrow, since

we've seen each other two days in a row?

MR. COHEN: Well, there is Senate Bill 42. I don't know when you're going to schedule that.

REP. WILLIS: Okay.

MR. COHEN: One for hearing, so...

REP. WILLIS: Okay. Questions or comments? Well, thank you.

MR. COHEN: Thank you.

REP. WILLIS: I guess we're pretty questioned out at this point.

MR. COHEN: I wonder why. Thank you.

REP. WILLIS: Welcome. Is Sharon --

SHARON GUSKY: Hi.

REP. WILLIS: Is this your first hearing?

SHARON GUSKY: It sure is. I want to thank you for this opportunity --

REP. WILLIS: Well, I have to introduce you. Sharon comes from the best community college in Connecticut, Northwestern Connecticut Community College, just, you know --

SHARON GUSKY: Why, thank you.

REP. WILLIS: That's only because I'm an alum. I'm prejudiced.

SHARON GUSKY: I know.

REP. WILLIS: I just needed everyone to know that.

Several of our -- how many community college graduates do we have here? No, you didn't -- over there? Quite a few. A lot of legislators are community college graduates.

SHARON GUSKY: Oh, wonderful.

SB40

So my name is Sharon Gusky. I'm a professor of biology at Northwestern Connecticut Community College and also advise the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society students.

And I know a lot of people have already addressed how students end up in remedial classes, so I'm not going to kind of go there. I just want to talk a little bit about our remedial students at Northwestern.

So in the fall, we had about 136 that scored into remedial English. Only about a third of those students are in the upper tier of remedial.

So only about a third qualify for that Maryland learning project type model, okay? So the other 70 percent, okay, 66 percent score well below. They have a larger deficit in their skills.

If you look at the lowest-tier student, they are reading and writing at about the 8th grade level. So you're looking at taking students in one year two semesters and getting them from 8th grade to college. That's a really daunting task for both the students and the faculty members, okay.

So we recently did a revision on our English program. So prior to that, about 28 percent of the students were successful in going

from 8th grade to 12th grade college-ready in two semesters, which I thought was phenomenal. I was surprised that anybody could really remediate that much that well that quickly.

With our current revision, we have about 42 percent of the students, and the revision involves integrating reading and writing into one class, and involving technologies, so the students do a lot of in-class writing, in-class reading and in-class discussions. They meet twice as long. They meet six hours a week.

So now, you know, about 42 percent of these students are successful. This students are extremely successful. A number of them go on to complete college, and I do want to talk a little bit about the whole graduation rate thing.

They become honor students, which is where I see them, okay? They go on to attain their college degree, become skilled members of the workforce, and some of them even go on to get their bachelor's degree from places they were rejected from previously, like UConn and Central, and places that they never thought they could go, like Trinity and Wesleyan.

These students would not be successful without remedial education. You've been in the community college system for about 14, 15 years. We -- the community college system has not always enforced or had available remedial education.

Prior to that, students were let into the classes without the skills. The pass rate

in classes was extremely low. In my biology class when I first started, and there were other biology teaching (inaudible) system, 50 to 60 percent of the students were failing mainly because they couldn't read college-level textbooks and they couldn't write. With the remedial education, students are successful.

One of the things that you asked is what's the cost? What's the problem with just letting them try? There's a huge cost with just letting students try, especially students that are that far behind in their education.

Obviously the cost is self-esteem. A lot of these students are first-time college students. They don't see themselves, as mentioned before, as college students if they fail. They're like, okay, I'm not a college student. They're going to go on. They're going to leave.

Time. Sets them at least two semesters behind. But the greater impact, which nobody has mentioned, is the impact on financial aid. If students do not successfully complete their courses, they can lose their financial aid. It affects their GPA, so their financial aid won't be renewed.

They can -- yes, they can go back and retake the course, but that also affects their financial aid, because you're only allowed to repeat a course so many times.

So having these remedial courses gives students stepping stones to success so they can complete their degree.

And if you look at graduation rate as a measure of community college success, it's very strange, because one, the federal government measures it as full-time students who graduate within three years. At Northwestern, that's 13 percent of our students, okay?

If you look at our transfer students, 25 percent of our first-time full-time students transfer in three years without graduating, which I believe probably if you look at the success rate of remedial students, you're going to find that a number of them once they become successful college level students transfer without graduating. That's something that no one's looked at or mentioned.

And if you look at the success, at Northwestern we measure academic standing, so how do students at the end of every semester -- what's their academic standing?

Eighty-three percent of our students end the semester in good academic standing, which means that their grade point average is a C or better.

So these students with the remedial education are going on to be successful.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you, Sharon. I do have a question --

SHARON GUSKY: Yes.

REP. WILLIS: -- in terms of your success rate.

How do you -- is your program different from

what's happening from remedial or developmental education at the other 11 community colleges?

SHARON GUSKY: Yes, so that's one of the things, is all community colleges kind of have their different approach. And for some -- you know, we have slightly different populations, but -- so three years ago, students had to take a -- they took a separate course in reading and a separate course in writing. They had two different instructors. There was no correlation between the curriculum.

So now they have one course that they take that unites reading and writing. It's one instructor. They meet six hours a week, and usually at least half of the time they're meeting in the computer lab, and they're doing writing in class that the teacher can then work with them one on one and assess and help them with their -- with the skills as they need.

So this just started three years ago, so the success rate is just one set of data on that program.

And they are using ePortfolio, so do a lot of writing on their own, because now they have their own internal, like, website that they can post their writing. They do a lot more reviewing of their work. So there's more motivation for the students in that way.

REP. WILLIS: You've heard those statistics we've talked about today. They are statewide, nothing to brag about, obviously.

Different schools have -- do you have a model that could be extrapolated for other community colleges? I mean, do you compare community college to community college? Do you get together and say, hey, listen, this is what -- what our rates of success are and how does that --

SHARON GUSKY: Yes. Actually, within the state, there are three systemwide discipline groups. So CSet, which is the English group, so they get together and they compare their data and their methodology. There's MATTIE CON, which is the math, and then there's (inaudible), which is the biology group.

And we actually offer a developmental biology course for our students at Northwestern. We're the only one in the system. But it does help build up the stem population, so students that come in without science skills. So there is communication between those disciplines.

REP. WILLIS: Representative Sayers.

REP. SAYERS: Just a question, and I don't know the answer to this. You said that there's a cost in terms of loss of scholarship money when they fail a course.

SHARON GUSKY: Oh, yes, Pell Grants, financial aid.

REP. SAYERS: Pell Grants. But does it pay for the remedial courses?

SHARON GUSKY: It does pay for the remedial courses as long -- and they just have to be successful in those to show that they can do college-level work so that the grant --

federal money works.

So if they fall -- GPA falls below -- so if you fail those courses, there's a --

REP. SAYERS: Obviously you probably shouldn't be there.

SHARON GUSKY: Right, but --

REP. SAYERS: But --

SHARON GUSKY: But it does pay for those courses. So they're much better off taking a remedial course and then taking the college-level course than taking the college-level course, failing it and taking it again.

REP. SAYERS: But that's a Pell Grant. But there's other scholarship money. My understanding is a lot of it does not -- would not cover any type of remedial courses.

SHARON GUSKY: The scholarships our students get, I believe they can -- they can use it -- it depends -- the federal -- most of our students rely on the federal money.

REP. SAYERS: The Pell Grant.

SHARON GUSKY: The Pell Grant. And they do pay -- as long as you give them institutional credit. They do cover.

REP. SAYERS: Thank you.

REP. JANOWSKI: Thank you.

Just a quick follow-up question. Do you have students that have been placed in the, for example, remedial category and in

talking with that individual, they have said to you, well, I know I'm in there, but I really, really think I can do it without the, quote, remedial course?

What -- what kind of action do you take in that regard?

Do you allow -- do you give the student the opportunity to -- if you feel strongly about --

SHARON GUSKY: They have a few students. One, the placement test, they can retake the placement test. And before they do, we give them access to the tutoring center.

There are online programs that we give them access to that help them test where their skills are lacking and how to build them up. They can take the placement test.

If they tested close to the college level or they feel like they're -- they can do the college level, they can take an essay -- write an essay, and that's graded by the English department. That demonstrates their ability to write a (inaudible), paragraph or whatever they have to do in response to writing college level.

We also have CLEP tests for those students who feel like they can do the work. In the sciences we have what we call prerequisite tests that we give our students if they feel like they have the knowledge of the prerequisite course, they can take the test. And if they pass the test, they can come into the course.

REP. JANOWSKI: Okay. So the answer is if they

basically pass certain measurement criteria --

SHARON GUSKY: Correct.

REP. JANOWSKI: -- then they would be allowed. But if they felt very strongly on their own that they could do it without having to take those measurement criteria, that's discouraged, is what I'm hearing.

SHARON GUSKY: It is discouraged, because we want them to be successful, and the courses have prerequisites. So you mentioned overriding prerequisites. But the prerequisite for all the college-level classes is eligibility for English 101.

If you override that, those students are not only going to be in -- in an English class that they might not be prepared for, they're going to be in a history class that they're not prepared for because they can't do the reading. They're going to be in a biology class, maybe four, or classes that require heavy reading and heavy writing that they cannot do.

REP. JANOWSKI: And I'm hearing that term again, remedial versus prerequisite used synonymously and they're different.

SHARON GUSKY: Well, they're not really different. The prerequisite for general biology is eligibility for English 101. If the student doesn't know that they're eligible for English 101, they can't get into the biology class. It's a prerequisite for the course.

REP. JANOWSKI: Your -- the discussion we're talking about now, the 136 students that you

mentioned earlier, those were students right out of high school?

SHARON GUSKY: No, not necessarily. Only 20 percent of the students of a community college of the entering class is right out of high school.
The other 80 percent have been out of school for five or more years.

REP. JANOWSKI: So these are -- okay. So what's about the average age that we're talking about? Do you -- is it 20-year-olds? Is it 30-year-olds? Is it -- what are we talking about?

SHARON GUSKY: I don't -- I don't know what the average -- it depends on -- there's a big difference between our day sections of our classes where the average is probably like 22 or 23 and our evening sections where it might be 37.

REP. JANOWSKI: And just a quick follow-up question to that would be have you found that some of the students that are basically in the category of needing remedial courses -- let's say they might leave. They take a course, you know, they get discouraged, they decide they're not going to go through with it. They're going to just leave the education system.

How many of those end up coming back later on after a few years have gone by as what I consider adult students?

SHARON GUSKY: I don't know what the specifics are, but when you pull -- when I pull their transcripts, which I look at for the honor students, I see a number -- especially of

our honor students -- who get into the honor society, started out maybe five or six or ten years earlier, left and came back. I'm sure the community college system probably has that data.

REP. JANOWSKI: Yes, well, I would say they do, because they do have a lot of flexibility with adult learners.

The reason I -- I bring these up is because if a student is motivated enough to consider themselves able to take a particular course without remedial attention, I'm not certain why they wouldn't be allowed to do it.

SHARON GUSKY: I think you can motivate away a certain level of lack of skills, but it's very difficult, and I don't see it happening, people motivating away four years if they're coming in reading at 8th grade level. No matter how motivated they are, if they don't have the skills, they are not going to be successful.

REP. JANOWSKI: Thank you.

REP. WILLIS: Yes, Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE: One of the reasons it's so good that we're hearing from folks from different systems today is it's becoming pretty clear that there are real differences between the different systems.

So as I'm hearing you, it sounds very different than what's the case with the CSU campuses where a student could be in developmental English that's not moving them toward a degree, but at the same time, they could be taking political science, they

could take biology, they could take these other classes. They have to ultimately pass that first-level English class.

But what I'm hearing you say is if a student tests in and doesn't qualify, doesn't pass that English test, Accuplacer, it doesn't just mean they can't take that class. It means they can't take a host of our entry-level classes.

Is that accurate?

SHARON GUSKY: That is accurate.

SENATOR BYE: So this is an enormous barrier at the community colleges if a student -- I mean, in terms of access to other classes, if they can't pass the entry -- entrance exam for English, are there classes they could take, are there some classes toward a degree that they could take?

SHARON GUSKY: There are. What we find is a number of the students come in, and they end up in the series of remedial classes. The English now is six-credit. The math is six-credit. So that puts them as a full-time student just taking English and math.

And then once they get their skills up, they can enter the college-level classes. Like Steve Cohen mentioned, this was put into place to deal with the fact that people were taking the classes without the skills, failing, not graduating, using up the federal money, not having the money then to come and go back and take those remedial classes.

SENATOR BYE: Right. And now a lot of people said

don't use graduation rates. I'm trying to tuck that into my head and now you're saying that it's affecting graduation rates, and we know at this point --

SHARON GUSKY: No, their ability to graduate.

SENATOR BYE: Right. Their ability to graduate right now is about eight percent if they're in remedial, according to the Board of Regents.

SHARON GUSKY: Right. But do they -- do they look at how many actually transfer? Because like I said, at Northwestern --

SENATOR BYE: Well, there were -- well, there were -- yes. There were. Eleven percent transferred and 7.7 percent graduated. So even if you count transfers and you don't know if they ultimately graduate, you only know they transferred. You're still only at 18 percent --

SHARON GUSKY: Right. Which is about --

SENATOR BYE: -- success rate.

SHARON GUSKY: -- the graduation rate of the community college students. I believe that's what Dave Levinson mentioned to begin with, is about 19 percent.

SENATOR BYE: Right.

So what kind of classes could a student take at a community college if they didn't pass the English or the math Accuplacer?

SHARON GUSKY: They could take some of the art. They can take public speaking. Some music,

the computer classes, some they need English, some they don't.

SENATOR BYE: So it's a big -- it's a big wall if you say you can't, you know, take this class. It means you can't take a lot of things.
And actually, I -- I understand that all of this has been done to help students, and I believe it's helped thousands of students, the work that people are doing in these remedial education classes.

I just think as policymakers, we're trying to think big picture, how can we help the most.
And as I understand the national data, students on the brink, so, you know, if they do research and tests, students within a point of each other, some get remedial, some don't, you know, the remedial education is beneficial, you know, this -- you can show looking -- because you have people of similar scores, some who take it, some who don't, slightly more are successful in graduating.

SHARON GUSKY: Right.

SENATOR BYE: It's like nine percent more.

But the big question is around students who have to take two levels or more. That's when the rates just plummet. I remember at one conference I was at, it was less than five percent of students who take two -- who test into two or more levels of remedial math or English ever graduate from a community college or anywhere else if you add in transfer.

But I -- I tried to find that statistic today and I couldn't. But what scares me about your system, you said two-thirds of the kids who test on English are testing into the -- needing at least two.

Is that --

SHARON GUSKY: No. Probably -- two-thirds of them don't test in the top tier, the top level, so we have three levels.

SENATOR BYE: But three levels for remediation?

SHARON GUSKY: Three levels. So we have the bottom tier, which is the one I spoke about, they're on about the 8th grade level, English reading and writing.

SENATOR BYE: I mean, I think the public -- and I'm not really clear about what an 8th grade reading level is, but as I understand it, the New York Times is written on an 8th grade reading level. Is that -- I mean, most magazine -- oh, The Currant is 6th? Great.

SHARON GUSKY: No, the --

REP. WILLIS: Connecticut Mirror is at a 10th grade.

SHARON GUSKY: 12th.

REP. WILLIS: Yes.

SHARON GUSKY: Yes -- Ms. Dupont mentioned, you know, 41 percent of adults in Connecticut have a low literacy level.

SENATOR BYE: No, it's not good. In the United

States, 8th grade is the average reading level of the average resident of the United States.

SHARON GUSKY: Yes, and the college level textbooks that we use are college level (inaudible) that 8th grade level.

SENATOR BYE: So what I'm trying to get at, so does reading level go like this or does it sort of go like this, like -- I don't know if you're with me; but, like, my guess is the difference between a 2nd grade and an 8th grade reading level is enormous. But the difference between 8th grade and 12th grade maybe isn't as big.

And I --

SHARON GUSKY: I think it -- you know, there -- there are people who it might go like that and can make that jump quickly. And with what we're doing through mediation before, you know, 28 percent of the students can make that jump fairly quickly.

SENATOR BYE: Right.

SHARON GUSKY: And there are people who take a longer time to do that, okay, so some of those -- 70-something percent, 72 percent, maybe took longer, some of them. Some of them are never going to make that leap.

SENATOR BYE: Well, I mean, from your testimony, it sounds like you're really helping students progress --

SHARON GUSKY: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: -- you know, on an individual basis.

What we're trying to get at is systematically what are some changes we can make.

So when you heard the woman from the Bridges program testify, could you imagine with the resources a model like that at the community colleges where students start in English 101 or 110? What is it with you guys?

SHARON GUSKY: We have 101.

SENATOR BYE: 101, right.

So if you offered 101 with an extra two hours a week, do you think most of your students would be successful?

SHARON GUSKY: I think that -- that 30 percent that score into the higher level of a remedial, which usually -- because they take one semester, I think they probably would be very successful in a program like that.

I think that the students who score with the two or more semesters that they need are not going to be successful in a program like that.

SENATOR BYE: Right. And most of -- that's who's most at risk for never graduating, the people in those -- like you're down around five percent.

SHARON GUSKY: Correct.

So, I mean, you said -- you mentioned, too, there was no cost to colleges for remedial education. There's a huge cost to the community colleges, because we have to -- we have limited funding. We shift our funds to

remedial education to meet the needs of those students who are coming in at a low floor, okay?

We're open-access. I think it's a good thing. I would hate to lose 28 or 40 percent of the students that can actually do it. But we do have a cost on the other end.

One of the reasons that I think that the transfer rate is twice as high as the graduation rate in community colleges is because we offer fewer of those upper-level courses.

(Inaudible) asking the math professor why there's so many remedial as opposed to college level classes. We see that more so at the community college. So there is a great cost to the community college for offering these classes. We don't want to just dump those students who -- especially those who can be successful.

Twenty-eight or 40 percent, 30 percent of the students, that's still a -- a great number of people. It does make a good impact on the students and the -- and the state. You have now a literate workforce with skills -- skilled labor.

SENATOR BYE: Right, right, and I -- you and I wouldn't disagree about that, but I -- I think we need to ask the Office of Fiscal Analysis about the, you know, what -- what the impact is, because I've certainly heard models where it was not a money loser for the community colleges, that remediation is where community colleges are bringing a lot of tuition dollars.

As our colleagues were saying, the Pell Grants, their loans, the students are paying what they pay for any class at a community college. Your argument is that you have to have --

SHARON GUSKY: Right.

SENATOR BYE: -- more support.

SHARON GUSKY: But there's only so many faculty and so many adjuncts and so many sections we're allowed to offer, so that general dollar fund, if you're looking at offering a class where you have maybe ten -- you know, Northwestern, very small community college, right, the smallest in the state, FTE, full time headcount -- I mean full time equivalent, is about 700, 750, so very small.

Okay. When you look at offering a class for -- maybe a Health II class for eight or ten students who are going to need that to go on to graduate or offering a remedial class that you know you can fill with 30 students, where is the decision going to be? And it tends to be on the remedial end, so that does impact graduation rates and success.

SENATOR BYE: Right. And I would say in our meeting, one agency that studied this a lot said you should just pull remedial education out of the community colleges and out of the, you know, high schools and have -- I'm not saying to do this.

SHARON GUSKY: Right.

SENATOR BYE: I'm just saying, they were saying to

really get a handle on this, you've got to pull it out of the existing structure, and he was saying that because it's so hard to disentangle the financial incentives and all the drivers within the higher education system.

SHARON GUSKY: Right.

SENATOR BYE: I'm not asking you to answer that. I'm just it was a really interesting proposal.

SHARON GUSKY: It is. But then you hit the dilemma of the financial aid issue. If it doesn't count -- the remedial don't count for college credit, institutional college credit, then they're not covered by financial aid.

SENATOR BYE: And the student.

SHARON GUSKY: And the students don't have access.

SENATOR BYE: And then they're not using their Pell Grants and their loans either.

So you see, it's a double --

SHARON GUSKY: Yeah, they can't get in the door. If they can't get in the door --

SENATOR BYE: Right -- no, we went through the door.

SHARON GUSKY: If they can't get through the door, then they're not going to graduate.

SENATOR BYE: We want them in the door. We want them in the door. And I'm sorry to go back and forth with you --

SHARON GUSKY: It is, it's a tough problem. I'm very glad you guys are dealing with it.

SENATOR BYE: Yes. No, I think it is a complex question. I think we'll ask our Office of Fiscal Analysis to look at this and ask about sort of how much of the income of community colleges is tuition for remedial classes from outside sources.

SHARON GUSKY: Right.

SENATOR BYE: So do you know -- you referred to the question I asked the gentleman from Southern today about what percentage of the math classes offered are remedial.

If you were to, you know, guess, you have a pretty small campus. You said, you know, you have smaller sections of calc, but --

SHARON GUSKY: I actually have it written down in my purse if you'd like me to --

SENATOR BYE: Yes, I'd just like to know, because I'm trying to see if our higher Ed system -- how much of our higher Ed system is focused on remedial classes versus classes that are moving kids toward degrees, because every class has a certain income associated with it.

SHARON GUSKY: I was looking at it -- mainly at the number of students. Let's see. I'm sorry, I didn't bring that. I thought I had that with me, but I don't.

But I can just -- it's a large number. We have seven -- you know, 71 students -- and keep in mind, again, our college is small --

enrolled in basic math. It's a large number of our students. And 70 students enrolled in our combination basic math and -- so 210 of our math students are remedial.

We only have 1700 FTEs total. So that's a large percent of our math courses are remedial.

SENATOR BYE: Now, I might just ask this question of folks, and I'll stop after this question, but if our Board of Regents folks maybe could find out at our CSU and community colleges, what proportion of the sections of classes offered, period, are remedial in nature, are not moving kids toward a degree?

Because I think that will give us a picture of their role in the finance. I mean, in Tennessee, they figured out that the remedial education was a $25 million a year proposition, and it was very complicated to untangle that. And -- and there -- I don't think there's anything but great motives here, and people --

SHARON GUSKY: Right.

SENATOR BYE: -- working very hard, but I think you have to understand the whole picture as we're moving kids toward degrees.

And I thank you for your testimony. You've been great. Your have passion for the students. You're so clear. Representative Willis speaks very highly of you and of your institution.

SHARON GUSKY: Oh, thank you.

SENATOR BYE: And thanks for your patience with my

questions.

REP. WILLIS: I have a question for you --

SHARON GUSKY: Sure.

REP. WILLIS: -- about the different levels of developmental or remedial classes. I'm getting the sense it's almost -- there's tiers.

SHARON GUSKY: There are.

REP. WILLIS: And they're all the same class?

SHARON GUSKY: No, they're --

REP. WILLIS: So you would have tier one, tier two and tier three?

SHARON GUSKY: Right. So we have English 033, which is a reading and writing for the --

REP. WILLIS: Is that the same throughout the whole community college system?

SHARON GUSKY: No. I mean --

REP. WILLIS: Oh --

SHARON GUSKY: We do have this common course numbering, but not all the colleges offer the same course, so there are tiers, and some of the cores do have different numbers.

So we put in 033, three years ago. I think some of the other community colleges now put it in. That's the six-credit reading and writing combined.

Then we have 085, which is also reading and

writing, six-credit, combined for students who score in the higher level of reading and writing but still need remediation.

And then we have 095, which is a three-credit reading and writing for those students who just need one semester of work, remediation.

REP. WILLIS: Okay. Could you get that for me?

SHARON GUSKY: Sure.

REP. WILLIS: Where that's outlined? And maybe CSU can get it for -- so we can have it for the other community colleges to sort of get a handle on what's happening at the different -- how they compare.

SHARON GUSKY: Yes. And then the math is more similar, so they have 075, which is -- they call it now pre-algebra, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, students who score into that pre-algebra, and then they have 085, which elementary algebra.

Then we have a course that's combined that we've developed, which is elementally algebra and pre-algebra combined into one semester for those students who feel like they can do the accelerated work.

REP. WILLIS: Top of the bell curve.

SHARON GUSKY: Yes.

REP. WILLIS: I'm going to start going down in terms of comprehension soon.

SHARON GUSKY: But we will -- I will have them

send --

REP. WILLIS: I have a question for you, though.

SHARON GUSKY: Okay.

REP. WILLIS: There was a reason I was asking this about the tiers, because the program I cited from the University of Maryland, developmental writing, which is the thing that I was interested in that sounds like at Eastern where you had a developmental course -- in other words, you had --

REP. WILLIS: Excuse me. You had English 101. The students were all in there, and then could be concurrently -- they were taking the support classes with other students in that same 101.

SHARON GUSKY: Correct.

REP. WILLIS: And it's -- do we -- it's extremely successful. The numbers prove out that it's successful.

But they're saying the highest level.

SHARON GUSKY: Correct. I did look that up, and they were looking at the top tier of students who scored the highest level of the developmental or remedial classes. That's about a third of our students.

REP. WILLIS: Should we be looking at that?

SHARON GUSKY: I think that would be a good place to start.

REP. WILLIS: Okay. Are we writing this down over there?

SHARON GUSKY: I think we really need to be specific to that tier of developmental students so that other students don't get misplaced into the classes because they cannot succeed.

REP. WILLIS: That message did not get through to us on the other testimony today, so... Representative Sayers.

REP. SAYERS: Sorry, for the second time.

Is it possible to offer those remedial courses, especially when you're talking about 003, like adult ed. classes?

I mean, it seems to me that if someone is taking that much of a remedial course, that they haven't learned what they needed to learn before they graduate from high school, and the proper place for that remediation should be back in the high school where they didn't learn it.

And the other part about the -- the reading, if I might just add this, people might be reading at an 8th grade level. Comprehension nationally is only at a 5th grade level.

I know when we start to look at healthcare and look at people reading up on their diseases to find out, their comprehension is at a 5th grade level, which means they may be able to read, but their understanding of what they're reading is truly lacking.

But it seems to me that if we could do some of that remediation in adult ed., then it moves the cost -- the cost becomes a very

different cost, because to me, what I see the cost is, what you just finished saying, was that because of only so many teachers within the system, that they're not teaching college level courses.

So students wanting to take college level courses won't have them available to them in the particular areas that they're looking to gain those courses.

So therefore -- which is probably why so many kids go take courses in this community college and that community college and that community college.

And I know you talked about only a very slow number of actually kids entering the community college system from high school. In Enfield that has turned around. Eighty percent of those students are entering from high school because of the cost of education and the economy at this point.

They are saving money by going to the community college, and we're failing them if we aren't offering them courses that will benefit them so that they can get that associate degree and go on to a four-year college.

SHARON GUSKY: Yes. Those are all really good points.

The adult education, I don't know what the rules for adult education are. I know we have a really close relationship through our academic skill center and Denise Linden, who runs that with the local adult education.

So we actually moved our remedial science

class into the adult education, and then we also offer it on campus so that the students come in -- especially those that want to go into the nursing and the healthcare and the engineering -- come in with the science skills they need. Can they do the same with the English? I don't see why not, but I don't know what the rules on the funding are, who would have access to those courses, what the requirements are.

I think a lot of that is if they haven't completed high school. And a lot of the adults you see going to college, they have completed the high school. But I guess it's something to look into.

REP. SAYERS: And that might be something that we might want to here look into to see if, you know, by transferring the cost to that, is it a less -- is there a less cost there and do we get a greater benefit in the long run, or is it just transferring costs.

If they're just transferring costs around, obviously we don't gain anything except kids going to the community college may gain.

SHARON GUSKY: Correct.

REP. SAYERS: Because if there is less remedial courses -- and the other thing I (inaudible) foundation, my understanding is that some kids, students, spend up to 18 months taking remedial courses. I mean, that's almost your whole two careers.

That's two -- that's a long time to be taking remedial. That says that person wasn't ready, wasn't prepared, or a number of other things are happening, and that's a

large cost.

And yet at the other end, that person probably isn't coming out with the skills they need for a job, which is even -- makes it -- the picture even worse if they don't have the job skills that they need.

SHARON GUSKY: Yes.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you very much, Sharon. I'll see you on April 27th? Yes, looking forward to it.

REP. WILLIS: Well, we have a special speaker up next. Jesse Parrott is the intern for the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, and he is from Manchester Community College, and he is our only student.

SB40

A VOICE: We needed you.

REP. WILLIS: We needed you (inaudible).

JESSE PARROT: That's why I wanted to come up.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We need 100 more.

REP. WILLIS: Yes. Welcome, Jess. You said you wanted to be on this Committee so you could participate in something like this, and here it is.

JESSE PARROT: I did. This is wonderful, and I thank you guys for everything that you do. It's very important to the students, and I don't think that you probably hear that enough, that what you do is very important to all of us.

Like Representative Willis said, my name is Jesse Parrott. I'm a student at Manchester Community College and a member of your Connecticut National Guard.

I just wanted to -- I wanted you guys to know firsthand from a student, because, like you said, there was none up here today, and just give you my perspective as to the Bill SB 40.

I would like to share two experiences of mine with you that I've had that pertain directly to this bill and everything that everyone is talking about today.

One of those experiences was that I was placed into English -- the one under 101, and I was -- I was furious about this, and I was also placed into math, the math that's below the one that I -- the one that is credited.

And I was so furious that I didn't want to take the class, I didn't want to -- I was just not engaged in the class, with the teacher or anything, and I ended up getting a C and a B in those classes. But every class above that, I have gotten an A in it and nothing less than an A and done my best work in that class.

So it was very -- it was very depressing for me to be placed in those classes when I knew I could do better. So that's one -- that's two of the main points I wanted to share with you today.

And also about -- I -- because of that, what she was touching on before about being placed in the 101 and you can't take other

classes because you're not placed in 101, I was placed into 93, like I said before, and I could only take three classes during my first semester in college.

And now, in hindsight, I can't graduate this semester because of two classes, I need two more classes, which if I was placed into a credited class, I would be graduating this semester instead of having to wait all the way until the fall semester, have to take two classes to graduate because summer won't be covered by financial aid or the tuition waiver for Veterans, so I just wanted to share those experiences.

If you guys have any questions, I can answer them pretty well. I'm working my financial --

REP. WILLIS: Questions or comments? Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE: ... but do you think now -- you took all the classes now. Do you think you could have passed the English before you took the remedial? Because, you know, you're saying you had a bad attitude so you didn't do well in the class.

Do you think if you had stretched you would have made it in the ten -- the first-level class and taken the other classes?

JESSE PARROT: In my experience now, Math 138, which is above Math 9 -- it's either 93 or 95, I'm not sure what the exact numbers are, but math 138 I'm taking right now, I am doing exceptionally well in.

I -- the math before that has not helped me at all. It seems like they started in

almost the exact spot. It seems like they started in almost the exact spot, and that could be because of the way the professors have taught the class.

But it doesn't seem -- a whole different situation in Math 138 than I was from the non-credited math course.

And also, with English, I believe it was completely unnecessary. I could have went right into English 200, probably, and learned -- because the way they teach you in English 200 is -- I've -- I've -- I have to say I've had very good professors, but the way they teach you in English 200, I think I could have went in English 200. And if I really tried really hard I could have squeaked by English 200, let alone get an A in it now.

Maybe that was because of English 101 and 110. But I can't say that for sure. But I know I could have squeaked by English 200 and gotten at least a passing grade that without remedial courses --

SENATOR BYE: Thank you.

And I appreciate your testimony, and I've got to get under this more from the students and get out on the campus, I think, but your testimony is really helpful, and it's going to cost you more time and money to graduate now, is what it sounds like.

JESSE PARROT: Exactly. And I work in my financial aid office and it's actually ironic that we were working on -- if you -- if you take too many credits, financial aid won't cover it over a certain amount of credits.

SENATOR BYE: Right.

JESSE PARROT: So if you want to finish an associate's degree, that's normally 60, 65 credits. If you take 90 credits, after 90 credits, they won't cover your -- you for financial aid anymore. So that could be a problem with taking all these remedial courses as well.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. Thank you, Exhibit A, I'm turning it over to my colleague.

REP. WILLIS: And I'm going to turn it over to Representative Janowski, who says that Manchester is in her district.

REP. JANOWSKI: Okay. I -- it's my roots, Manchester Community College is my roots. And I heard you say how you're from Manchester Community College. Great school, by the way.

JESSE PARROT: I love it. It's one -- I have the best professors at Manchester Community College.

REP. JANOWSKI: And, President Glickman, hold him to a high standard. She came here specifically (inaudible) very well motivated.

JESSE PARROT: Thanks.

REP. JANOWSKI: And I'm glad to hear you talk about some of the remedial courses that you did have to take. There's no question in my mind based on what you have said that you would have done well without them, as well.

Nobody knows. But it certainly makes me feel a lot better, because when I attended Manchester Community College, I saw a lot of the not remedial, I never heard of remedial then, prerequisite courses as impediments to my -- what I wanted to take, what I wanted to do.

And I did everything I could to avoid them like the plague, which I did, and I done -- did very well without them, only because I was motivated to succeed and do what I needed to do to transfer to Trinity College.

So, you know, not everybody -- we can't paint everybody with the same brush, and that's why I asked the question earlier, if there's a motivated student that does want to take a course without having to take either a prerequisite or there's something to be said about allowing them to do it, through an interview process, through those kinds of things, not necessarily through a measurement process, but that's just -- but I thank you for being here, and good luck to you.

JESSE PARROT: Thank you. Thank you very much.

REP. JANOWSKI: And get those other two courses out of the way. See if you can avoid one of them.

JESSE PARROT: I will try and do that.

REP. WILLIS: We'll have to give him a good grade for here, right? I'll put that he testified.

JESSE PARROT: Yes.

REP. WILLIS: We'll add that to your -- huh? Oh, Representative LeGeyt.

REP. LeGEYT: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for your testimony. It's great to -- it's great to hear it from the front lines.

JESSE PARROT: Yes.

REP. LeGEYT: We had another speaker here today from -- Dr. Malenczyk from ECSU, and she said that in her experience, there were -- she -- she has a chance to interact with all the students who test in to the developmental courses, and she has a chance to meet with them and that if they make a compelling argument, sometimes she'll waive the developmental course in favor of letting them go on to the first level course, and I think it was -- I think it was English that she was involved in.

Was that opportunity available to you at Manchester?

JESSE PARROT: If the opportunity was available, it wasn't presented to me or it wasn't made aware to me, because if it was, that would be something that I would have 100 percent taken advantage of.

REP. LeGEYT: As you think back, you said that you were quite upset. I understand that. Did you -- did you have an opportunity to share that dissatisfaction with anybody in The administration?

JESSE PARROT: I wasn't as -- I did share it with them, and they thought because of my background that it would have been -- because I had shared my story with them

about I'm a first-generation college student and I have a lot of bad experiences in my past.

But I had shared that with them, and they thought it would be best for me to -- because I shared it with one of the deans, and they thought that it would be best for me to do those classes, so I did it but kind of with a chip on my shoulder.

REP. LeGEYT: Yes, yes, I understand. Thank you.

REP. WILLIS: Thank you. Thank you. And I hope you enjoy the rest of the session with us.

JESSE PARROT: I'm sure -- so far it's been great. I'm sure I'll enjoy it.

REP. WILLIS: And thanks for coming up here to testify. And maybe President Glickman can watch you on television. Thank you.

We have one more person, David Downes. I don't know if he was coming back -- he -- no? He's not coming back? Oh, you're David Downes. Okay.

DAVID DOWNES: Thank you for hanging in here and listening to everything. My name is David Downes. I'm vice president of the Connecticut Association of Adult and Continuing Education, and I'm here to represent that group to speak positively on a couple of the bills that we're -- that are raised here, Raised Bill 5028 and Bill SB 40.

And just to summarize, because a lot has been said here, but I -- we are in favor of Raised Bill 5028 because just the way it's

written, it's well written in that it says after a year of the implementation of the common core standards at the high school levels, that there be a coordination with the college levels.

Of course it would be assumed that that would be happening, but I think having a bill, something written into law, assures that it happens, and that -- that's key, because so much of what you've heard today I think is kind of a -- evidence of the disconnect between what happens in high school and what happens in college.

That -- enough talking doesn't happen. And clearly the evidence from Western Connecticut shows what happens when there is that dialogue and when there is that cooperation and coordination.

So we would like to see that happen statewide. And at the same time, kind of just emphasize what we're going through as adult ed. directors, coordinators, teachers, that all of these standards also being a part of something that we are -- we are using to coordinate the standards that we have in adult ed. with now the new higher level, more in-depth common core standards.

At the same time, we have another moving target, and that is the GED, which is changing, which is also coordinating its testing areas with the common core. And just to let you know that that is something that we have initiated.

We have had an all-day session with folks from the GED, and also with the State Department of Education, so that what is

happening in adult ed. also starts to coordinate and match up better with what happens at the initial stages of college rather than what it is right now where you get a GED, you've graduated high school, but there isn't necessarily a coordination or connection between that -- those skills and what's needed to be successful in college.

So we are working in concert with that, but this 5028 would also help us in that whatever is being done K-12 is also being informed by the college -- colleges on what they need.

The -- the second raised bill, 40, would directly and positively affect our adult education secondary graduates who, as has been stated here, they try to access credit courses.

But the sole determining factor in a number of cases -- and we hear this again and again -- is that Accuplacer tests, which is an online course that students have not seen before, very different from any of the standardized testing that they've done.

The -- the essay that's required has to be written in a short amount of time, typed in, as opposed to what happens on the SAT that's written in and is hand -- hand-read, we figure that -- we -- we agree that this would at least allow students to bypass that.

And I think (inaudible) made yourself a lot easier if you just kind of concentrated on community college as that -- that area, because the Accuplacer is the big dilemma there. College level may be a whole other

thing, and we certainly heard a lot of testimony to the contrary today.

But for us, our folks in particular, it's the community college level, and they show -- and time and again -- that they can do well without necessarily the remedial. But also the second part is that you put in there about having a tandem course, tandem help situation, such as was mentioned from Eastern Connecticut.

And I think ideally that's the way to go. Does it cost more? Yes, in short run. In the long-term, I think it costs a whole lot less in terms of what -- how it will help the economics of the state.

Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you, David. Welcome to our Committee and thank you for your patience. So am I hearing you correctly -- so, I mean, adult ed. works with some of the students with the biggest challenges?

DAVID DOWNES: Mm-hmm.

SENATOR BYE: And you're finding when your students from adult ed. try to move into the community college system, students that based on your, you know, adult ed. understanding of their capacity, they could pass an entry-level English class, but the sole reason they can't is this test?

DAVID DOWNES: Well, that's -- that's the tough thing for us, saying, okay, you didn't do so well on that test. Well, did you talk to anybody? Because we -- you know, here's the essays that you've done, here's the math

score that you got.

Because we have -- we also have standardized testings scores, and even the GED has an honors level with it.

But these folks get thrown by that test score on the Accuplacer, and it's almost like people can't talk to them. Just the numbers are too large.

You know, I don't -- I don't certainly mean to knock community college, but I think it's very overwhelming. The numbers come in. They have to do something objective. If they listen to everybody's argument, you do end up with some of the problems that were discussed here.

But I -- I think the problem is -- is more the course that they're being kept from and how that's structured, and if it were structured differently, you wouldn't have that issue and they could come in and get something that would be worth -- worth their credit and worth all that Pell Grant money that they're wasting and not being able to stead (inaudible) forward.

HB 5028

SENATOR BYE: My other question, too, is just your opinion about this assessing in high school, and I think that certainly came out today, that we need to help facilitate, if we can, those conversations between community colleges and high schools, CSU and high schools, and build those bridges, like Western is really a model for.

DAVID DOWNES: Mm-hmm.

SENATOR BYE: Do you think -- you know, you've been

involved in public systems. As I think about the ratcheting up of assessing students in high school to make sure they're ready for college, which is probably a much bigger -- even though we've talked about it less today, a much bigger part of solving this puzzle than whether we -- whether or not we allow students in the classes, do you think it's worth our time to wait for the common core assessments to be developed or do you think we should look to go statewide with some other system of assessing students that exist now, whether it be PSATs or Accuplacer or something along those lines now and then when 2014 comes, shift so that everything is aligned?

DAVID DOWNES: I would say given the amount of work that the public school systems are putting into aligning their standards, that it's probably better to wait, tough as that is, because you see how immediate the problem is and the economic situation we're in.

But I don't think you can have two systems, because then folks would have to say, okay, PSAT, what else can we do to make sure that people -- or whatever it is.

I think there are a number of things that are, you know, within the test and so forth that this state has tried to say you must demonstrate these things in order to be successful.

Senior high school, (inaudible), college. I don't think that -- just given how much of my own system in West Hartford is working on those -- the -- the common core standards, I think if that comes into play and is successful, then I think, yes, a number of

Can we do it? I think we've shown through Nellie Mae grants, stuff that the other pilot -- that the pilot -- other pilot programs that it can be done small scheme think for the level of -- of the -- of the need, I think adult ed. could meet that at a better -- but it is, as was also pointed out, it is a funding issue.

It's -- our funding restricts us to only working with folks up until they've got a high school diploma. If you have a high school diploma but you don't have the skills, it becomes a paying situation, which may be all right, too, but we can do it at a far less cost and without the Pell Grant stuff.

SENATOR BYE: Right. It's interesting, and I give my co-chair a lot of credit for the pilot that's in place now that's looking at how adult ed. can solve some of these problems, and it is fascinating.

The current system puts the burden on students, so it doesn't put -- the financial burden, so it doesn't put the student on the state or the city or the town even though ultimately that might cost a quarter of the -- of the amount.

DAVID DOWNES: Right.

SENATOR BYE: So that's why I really want to understand how the financing is driving all of this to -- I always think -- my friend Jeanne Rustesis from Stamford always said figure out the money, and then you can make sense of everything else.

DAVID DOWNES: You've got motivation, right.

REP. WILLIS: I actually have a question about the money, too, because that was a challenge we looked at doing a program with adult ed. at Middlesex.

The issue is adult ed. is funded through the risks -- where is your funding --

DAVID DOWNES: Adult ed. is local monies for half of it and state monies for half, on a matching scale, anywhere from zero percent for a wealthy community that funds adult ed. entirely on their own up to 65 percent, which would be large cities, Hartford would get about that percent from the state, so somewhere in there.

So it's a mix. The total amount is about $40 million, half and half, local and half -- half state.

RISKS are involved only if they're in, like, EConn is a regional --

REP. WILLIS: That's where I'm from.

DAVID DOWNES: Yes.

REP. WILLIS: So I have a regional school system, so it's the RISKS that does the adult ed.

But the issue is -- is funding. And, as you said it, comes from the towns. And aren't you really saying that adult ed. is going to pick up the -- the towns are going to pick up the cost of these students who aren't prepared?

DAVID DOWNES: That's something to be looked at.

Right now, the -- we cannot enter those -- any student that we have who has a high school diploma that we might help out with basic skills in our line accounting system, so we don't get any credit for that through the state.

And we're -- and the cities, towns are not mandated to provide that education. If they were mandated to do it, I think there would still have to be some other funding source than -- they wouldn't want to take it on as an added -- added cost, even though all the economic arguments would be there to do that.

REP. WILLIS: Right. That was the challenge, unfunded mandate counsel.

DAVID DOWNES: Right.

REP. WILLIS: But of course I look at it from the perspective of they're sending students out of their system that aren't prepared, and don't they have an obligation to educate them, so --

DAVID DOWNES: Those students come back and --

REP. WILLIS: Right.

DAVID DOWNES: -- aren't productive as citizens.

REP. WILLIS: Right. Well, any other questions comments? Oh, I'm sorry, Representative LeGeyt.

REP. LeGEYT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for being patient today, sir.

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School of Health & Human Services
Departments of Communication Disorders • Marriage & FamilyTherapy
Nursing • Public Health • Recreation & Leisure Studies • Social Work

Testimony for Public Hearing on SB 40, HB 5028 and HB 5029
SB 40 AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN ACCESS TO COLLEGE LEVEL COURSES.
HB 5028 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ALIGNMENT OF COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS WITH COLLEGE CURRICULUM.
HB 5029 AN ACT CONCERNING COLLEGE READINESS ASSESSMENTS.

We are faculty members at Southern Connecticut State University and elected members of Southern's University Curriculum Forum Steering Committee, which guides and oversees the undergraduate curriculum on our campus.

We agree with the spirit of HB 5029 that would institute a high school college readiness assessment in the sophomore year and subsequent remediation plans (if needed) for students planning to go on to college in the remaining two years of high school. We also know that should this bill be passed, it will be several years before colleges and universities see the fruits of these efforts.

Because of this time lag, we are not in support of SB 40, which seeks to prohibit requiring students to take remedial courses in college.

A common misunderstanding is that low Bachelors Degree completion rates are due to student enrollment in college remedial courses (Adelman, 2006; Bettinger & Long, 2005). In fact, low graduation rates are linked to a lack of preparation at the secondary school level (Attewell et al., 2006). In other words, there is either a misalignment between what is expected of high school graduates compared with what is expected of college freshmen, or a lack of adequate preparation to achieve those standards prior to high school graduation. Until this problem is solved, remedial instruction is critical in helping underprepared students gain access to higher education. Some facts to support this appear below:

1. The best predictor of student success in college is secondary school preparation.
   - In examining the records of 17,499 Colorado students, it was clear that if students were not proficient on the state assessment as early as the sixth grade, they were likely to require remediation in their first year of college (Lefly, Lovell & O'Brien, 2011).
   - A rigorous high school curriculum is a strong predictor of college readiness (Adelman, 2006). Students who take challenging coursework, such as four years of college-preparatory English and three years each of college-preparatory mathematics, science, and social studies, are less likely to need remedial courses than students who don' t take such a rigorous curriculum (Abraham & Creech, 2002).

2. If a student is not college-ready by the time s/he reaches that level, remediation is important in order to increase the chances of success.

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- In a study conducted on outcomes of remedial students at public colleges in Ohio (the fifth largest public higher education system in the U.S.), it was found that students who received remediation in math and in English were over 15% and 9% more likely to complete a college degree in four years respectively.

3. Providing access to college classes by students who do not meet minimum proficiencies does a disservice to them and may result in:

- Higher failure rates in college-level courses
- Longer graduation times as students re-take courses
- Lack of retention as students become demoralized and prematurely drop out
- Loss of financial aid due to students not meeting GPA requirements to continue to receive financial aid, and/or reach the end of time or funds available to pay for their higher education

We want to support a successful and timely completion of students' degree programs at our colleges and universities. We think that adequate preparation is the key, and that students should be able to demonstrate college ready competencies prior to beginning any college degree program. We also think that remediation is best done in high schools and local school districts to keep the cost of high education within a reasonable range.

Until Connecticut high school graduates can demonstrate such competencies and high school remediation programs are in place, however, colleges and universities can best support student success by continuing to require them to take remedial courses when they are warranted.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these important issues affecting all of us in the State of Connecticut. Please contact us if you need additional information.

Martin Hartog, Ph.D., Chair, Undergraduate Curriculum Forum
Deborah Weiss, Ph.D., Chair, Liberal Education Program Committee
Gregory Adams, Ph.D., Chair, New Programs and Innovations Committee
Elizabeth King Keenan, Ph.D., Chair, University-Wide Impact Committee

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HEDTestimony

To: Jacqueline Perron
Subject: RE: Access to College-Level Courses Bill

From: Jacqueline Perron [mailto:jacqueline.perron@uconn.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2012 4:51 PM
To: HEDTestimony
Subject: Access to College-Level Courses Bill

SB40

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Jacqueline Perron. I am a student at the University of Connecticut. I am reaching out to you today in regards to this afternoon's live broadcast of the Higher Education Committee's discussion of Access to College-Level Courses Bill. All of the speakers I have managed to watch have been professors at various state schools. I truly respect and appreciate their drive to advocate for their students. As I understand, the bill is an attempt to make entry level courses available to all students no matter their level of preparedness for college subject matter. A concern I have with this bill that was not given a voice by these educators was the effect on students who test past remedial classes and after July 1, 2012, when the bill is enacted, will be taking classes along with those who otherwise would have been in remedial classes. I fully support higher education and feel that everyone should have access to it, however, it will be detrimental to those of us who are prepared for the course level to have students at a lower comprehension level participating in the classroom discussions, grading curves and dictating lesson plans.

Attending a college or university for a chance at higher education is, to me, about pushing one's self to the highest level of intelligence one is capable of. This means attaining the highest grades and producing work one can be proud of. Each individual is different and the level of work we produce is indicative of that so what may be one person's best work may be another's worst grade. Keeping this in mind, I would argue that classes, especially introductory courses, should include students of a range of education and understanding that best allows them to keep up with the curriculum of the course. The professor can then move at a speed best fit for the majority of the class.

By allowing students who are less prepared for the course work of entry courses to take them along with those who are, the rest of the class will be negatively affected. In order to address the needs of those students, the entirety of the curriculum of the course may not be covered and the educator may not be as able to cater to students who are keeping up with the course. Poor grades usually draw educators to readdress material and slow the speed of the material covered. This is not beneficial to those who comprehend the material and now find themselves sitting through classes and discussions of previously covered material.

Essentially, I am concerned that students, such as me, who are paying for the challenge of a higher education and who benefit from the current system will find entry level courses to be unnecessarily slowed by those who are not ready for the course work. I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Perron

2/16/2012

HEDTestimony

From: Hodgkin, Thomas C [THodgkin@nwcc.commnet.edu]

Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2012 1:46 PM

To: HEDTestimony

Subject: Comments on Re. SB 40 -- please add to the record

To the Committee,
I am astonished and dismayed at the proposals offered in the text of SB 40: An Act Concerning Open Access to College Level Courses. I quote:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2012*) (a) Any student enrolled at a public institution of higher education may take an entry level course in a college level program offered by such institution. Such institution may recommend a student for remediation, but shall not require students to take remedial courses or enroll in a precollege remedial program.
(b) Public institutions of higher education shall offer remedial support in the classroom to students who demonstrate shortcomings in any entry level courses in a college level program.

This proposal is almost unbelievable in its idealism and naiveté. Allowing -- in fact encouraging -- unprepared students to bypass a comprehensive remedial program or developmental class and simply enroll into college-level courses is a dereliction of your duty as stewards of higher education. Such enrollments pretty much guarantee failure for the individual student and disruption of the class for the other, adequately prepared, students. It imagines that serious deficits in skills and attitude can be wished away, and it runs counter to every bit of hard-won intelligence we have gained about how to deal with the gap between high school work and college-level work. It contains the arrogant assumption that college courses are so empty that an instructor will have time, curriculum space, and energy to offer "remedial support in the classroom" to those who walk in the door unable to meet the standards of the class as offered.

Aware of the rising cost of remediation for college-students, we here at Northwestern Connecticut Community College have re-configured our developmental/remedial courses to focus intensively and coherently on the reading/writing skill matrix and on development of quantitative skills. As a result of our more coherent, focused, and intensive curriculum, we have shaved at least a full semester off the time a typical remedial student spends in non-college level courses. But this gain has come exactly because we have been able to focus specifically, with a homogenous student group, on particular deficits in a dedicated class. To imagine that we could take these unprepared students and simply drop them into a college-level course (Biology, History of Western Civilization, Statistics) and expect them to "make up" their deficits is nothing more than wishful thinking.

This bill, while it might masquerade as being student- and budget-friendly, will actually harm students as they experience successive and self-confirming failures. It will cost colleges more, as higher percentages of students withdraw or drop out. And, it will do serious damage to the integrity and stature of our institutions. As one of my colleagues here at Northwestern said: "If SB40 goes into effect, 'The Zoo' (a derogatory term from the 1970's) will, after all, be an appropriate name for our institution and its sister schools – and we will take a huge step backwards."

I urge you to drop consideration of this legislation immediately and look more carefully into the ways these students may be best served within the realities of our current political and budgetary climate.

Thomas Hodgkin
Professor of English
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000442
Dr. David Levinson
Line 7 Page 1

CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Testimony by Dr. David Levinson
Board of Regents for Higher Education
ConnSCU
Before the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
February 16, 2012

Good morning, Senator Bye, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. For the record, I am Dr. David Levinson, Interim Vice President for the Connecticut Community Colleges of the Board of Regents (BOR). I am here today to speak on behalf of the 17 institutions that comprise the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (ConnSCU) System. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 5028, *An Act Concerning the Alignment of Common Core State Standards with College Curriculum*, House Bill 5029, *An Act Concerning College Readiness Assessments* and Senate Bill 40, *An Act Concerning Open Access to College Level Courses*

First let me comment on Senate Bill 40, *An Act Concerning Open Access to College Level Courses*. The Board of Regents is quite concerned at the results of remediation programs. They do not appear to lead to higher rates of degree attainment for the citizens of Connecticut. Here's the dilemma of remediation: too many students need it, and too few succeed when they get it.

Among community college students, about seven out of ten entering students take at least one remedial course upon entry, and while this proportion has been trending downward for full-time students from 74% in 2004 to 70% in 2011, it has increased for those entering as part-time students, from 63% to 71% over the same period. Remediation is less widespread at the Connecticut State University (CSU) campuses, but still about one out of five first-time full-time students at these four campuses enroll in at least one remedial course in their first semester. These remedial enrollment rates have dropped slightly from 23% in fall 2009 to 18% in fall 2011, but these changes have been driven more by different modes of delivery rather than an increase in readiness; over this same period, a consistent 32% to 34% have been identified as needing remediation.

Unsurprisingly, success rates for students who are identified for remedial coursework are lower than those who aren't. Among full-time, first-time community college students seeking an associate's degree who do not need remediation, the three-year graduation rate was 19.1% for those entering in fall 2004 or just under one out of five. This level of success clearly should be improved, but it stands in stark contrast to students who need any remediation for whom the three-year graduation rate was 7.8%, which translated into a completion for just one out of every thirteen entering students. For students who place into one of the lower levels of remedial mathematics, the success rates drop below 5% or 1 in 20, although if these students are given another year to graduate, this figure improves to one out of ten finishing a degree.

Among the CSUs, these gaps are smaller, with a six-year graduation rate of 47.8% for full-time, first-time students entering in fall 2004 who did not take remedial courses upon entry, compared to those who did take remedial courses, for whom the six-year graduation rate was five and a half

percentage points lower at 42.1%. To place such numbers in context, however, it is important to recognize that all of the national research about graduation rates point to the primacy of students' academic inputs as the primary determinant of their college success. A recent study by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA found that the six-year graduation rate of students with high school grades in the A or A+ range was 79.3% (and this does not count those who transferred and graduated somewhere else). The graduation rate for students with a B+ high school average, however, was just 59.8%; it was 48.7% for a B average, 36.6% for a B- average, and 27.7% for students with a C+ average.

We agree that we have to fix the broken approaches to remediation. We agree that we should "mainstream" as many students as possible into college level courses by providing co-requisites or course embedded support for those needing extra help. But we also must face the reality that we receive at our doorsteps each fall, many students who are way more than a little behind, for whom extra support in the regular course would not work at all well.

For those students, we have evidence that intensive instruction (perhaps for the summer) does work quite well. And we know that the model of a series of three credit-equivalent courses does not work very well, but a summer or semester of intensive work may work well. The model of disconnected courses allows students to drop out. Currently they may take one semester of remediation, then some credit bearing courses, but they cannot advance in math or writing unless they complete their remediation, so they give up.

We agree wholeheartedly with the "Complete College America" call that we answer the fundamental question about remediation – is what's being taught in developmental education what students really need to succeed? It is time to revisit both the structure and goals of remediation so that a coherent approach leading toward graduation becomes the norm, and we agree that tying a student's future success to results on a placement test is not serving students very well at all.

In fact, we have been taking many of these initiatives in our ConnSCU institutions – Western's Bridges Program, as well as other innovative summer programs across our campuses, for example. But we are concerned with the approach of SB 40 that takes away the ability of an institution to require students to move through remediation before taking college level courses. There may well be a kind of Darwinian result, where students fail at the introductory level in large numbers rather than receive the instruction they need to be prepared for college.

Since becoming an Achieving the Dream College in 2004, Housatonic Community College (HCC) has focused on increasing the success of students taking developmental math with the ultimate goal of students taking and completing college level math. HCC developed self-paced developmental math courses. Students progress at their own pace with mastery of all course content required in order to progress in the course and ultimately pass the course. Self-paced math permits students to accelerate their completion of developmental math. This has resulted in some students completing all remediation in one semester; others however, take more than one semester to complete one remedial course. The motivation and initiative of the student greatly affect the individual student outcomes. Providing the opportunity for acceleration of completion of developmental courses is stressed based upon the national research completed by Achieving the Dream and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Developmental Education Initiative. At the most recent State Policy meeting accelerated projects were extensively discussed and promoted.

My institution – Norwalk Community College – is also part of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Developmental Education Initiative. We have been successful in reducing a students' time solely in remediation by enrolling him/her in learning communities that are comprised of cohorts of students engaged in a "block-scheduled" combination of developmental and college level courses. I was a "participant observer" last fall when I taught a college-level Freshman Seminar Course that was conjoined to a college-level technology literacy course and a developmental English course. Learning communities as a promising practice for developmental education is underscored in the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) 2011 report "Developmental Education at Connecticut Community Colleges: A Key to Economic Recovery."

Ideally, we would appreciate the opportunity to take full advantage of the consolidation and look across all 17 ConnSCU campuses to assess best practices, what's working and what's not as we work to address this issue in a more holistic way. Of course, we would be happy to report back our progress to you in a year and discuss a legislative approach at that point, if necessary.

House Bill 5028

We fully support efforts to ensure the alignment of standards and curriculum between high schools and our institutions. Over the past two years, the P-20 Council, which was co-chaired formerly by the Department of Higher Education and now by ConnSCU, has worked to build relationships and collaborations between K-12 and higher education at the state level, as well as extending to developing partnerships at the district and institution level, in order to better prepare students for success. In support of these partnerships, the Council also developed, with the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC), the Connecticut College and Career Readiness Toolkit that provides examples of strategies to align curriculum between high school and higher education, which each member of the Committee received a copy of last week. District and higher education leaders that attended a series of workshops last fall received this toolkit, and shortly, every district and higher education leader in the state will receive it as well.

As further proof of our support and commitment to alignment efforts, there are a number of efforts underway in several of our institutions that have already begun to embark on this. Two examples of these efforts include the partnerships between Western Connecticut State University and Bethel school district, and Manchester Community College and Manchester and East Hartford High Schools. While both examples take different approaches to their alignment efforts, both are seeking the same goal, which is to prepare students that are college and career ready, including the reduced, if not eliminated, need for remediation. This requires faculty from both systems to work together. These are not the only examples of partnerships underway, and additional school districts and institutions have been in contact with us that are interested in developing similar partnerships to achieve the same end.

In order to ensure that alignment efforts are coordinated, we would recommend that a Common Core and Assessments Work Group be created as part of the existing P-20 Council charged with identifying and recommending strategies to achieve alignment of curriculum and assessments by school year 2014-15, when assessments aligned with the Common Core Standards are slated to be fully implemented. One already known barrier to these efforts, which the Work Group may need to address, is the lack of common or model curricula in math and English courses, which impacts the speed of scalability.

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Robert A. Kennedy
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Remedial Coursework: Participation, and Degree Completion Rates

This report provides a descriptive overview of student enrollment in remedial coursework in the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities as well as degree completion rates of students who enroll in these courses compared to those who do not. Data provided in this report originate from the centralized institutional research data base (IRDB) for the community colleges and the institutional research repository (IR repository) for the state universities.

Placement and participation in remedial coursework involves a complicated interaction among student preparedness or readiness to perform college coursework; institutional policies for assessment, placement, and completion of such coursework; student success in such coursework; and change over time among all of these factors. Data presented here include only students who entered in fall semesters and do not include summer term entrants so some figures may not align exactly with federal reporting standards. This report uses the term "remedial" to characterize coursework numbers below 100 that does not carry credits that count toward a degree.

Associate's Degree Completion Rates and Transfer-Out Rates for Community College Students

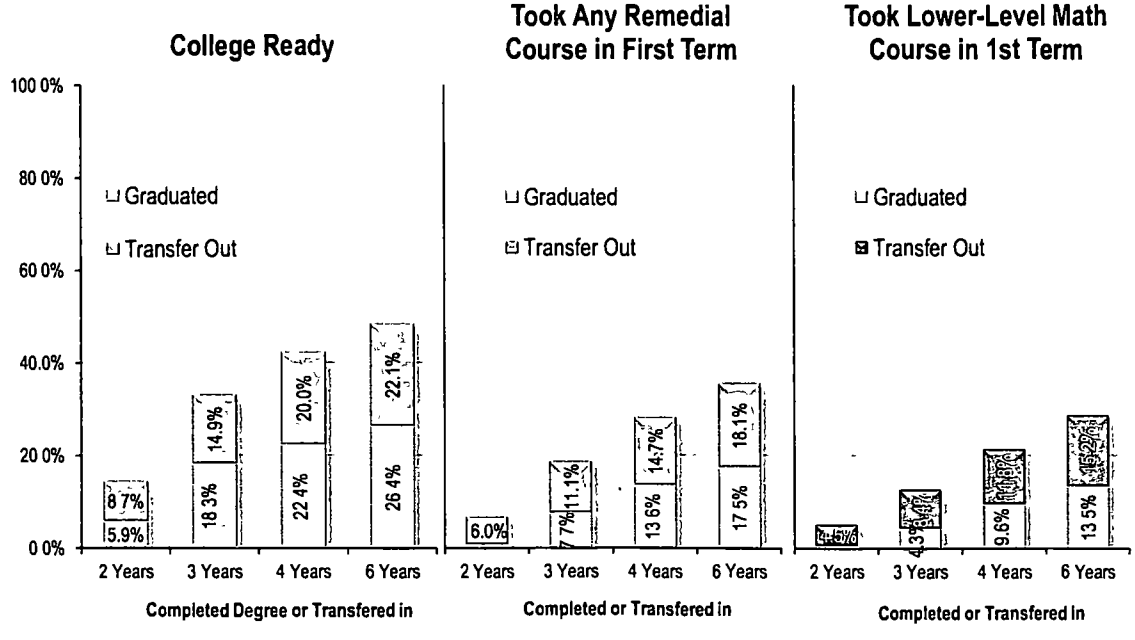

Figure includes only first-time, full-time students seeking associate's degrees beginning in fall 2005

Connecticut Community Colleges

Connecticut State University System

CharterOak STATE COLLEGE

Table 1. Placement and Enrollment in Remedial Courses
All Community College First-Time Students

		Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
Total Cohort	N	8,260	8,424	8,487	9,140	10,153	10,980	11,127	10,737
Registration Status									
Full-time	N	5,190	5,353	5,502	6,199	6,885	7,276	7,255	6,683
	Pct	63%	64%	65%	68%	68%	66%	65%	62%
Part-time	N	3,070	3,071	2,985	2,941	3,268	3,704	3,872	4,054
	Pct	37%	36%	35%	32%	32%	34%	35%	38%
Matriculation Status									
Certificate Seeking	N	605	604	721	654	463	515	431	413
	Pct	7%	7%	8%	7%	5%	5%	4%	4%
Degree Seeking	N	7,655	7,820	7,766	8,486	9,690	10,465	10,696	10,324
	Pct	93%	93%	92%	93%	95%	95%	96%	96%
Placement / Course Enrollment during First Term									
College Ready	N	746	799	899	879	974	1,264	1,296	1,179
	Pct	9%	9%	11%	10%	10%	12%	12%	11%
Took any remedial course	N	5,777	5,874	6,081	6,393	7,297	7,527	7,528	7,458
	Pct	70%	70%	72%	70%	72%	69%	68%	69%
Took remedial English	N	3,991	4,044	4,182	4,485	5,223	5,381	5,217	5,210
	Pct	48%	48%	49%	49%	51%	49%	47%	49%
Took remedial math	N	4,105	4,094	4,277	4,434	5,129	5,387	5,496	5,527
	Pct	50%	49%	50%	49%	51%	49%	49%	51%
Took lower level dev. math	N	2,297	2,368	2,388	2,450	2,794	2,677	2,726	2,603
	Pct	28%	28%	28%	27%	28%	24%	24%	24%

The sum of students assessed to be college ready and those taking any remedial course does not add to 100% because about 20% of students have incomplete placement data and/or students placing into remedial skills courses do not take them in their first term College ready indicates students successfully placed into courses that count toward their degree in math and English

Table 2. Placement and Enrollment in Remedial Courses with Degree Completion Rates
Community College First-Time, Full-Time Associate's Degree-Seeking Students only

		Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
Total Cohort	N	4,910	5,091	5,140	5,842	6,629	6,994	7,018	6,484
Placement / Course Enrollment during First Term									
College Ready	N	533	624	674	667	734	969	1,018	887
	Pct of cohort	11%	12%	13%	11%	11%	14%	15%	14%
	Graduated in 2 yrs	6.6%	5.9%	5.5%	8.4%	8.2%	6.6%		
	Graduated in 3 yrs	18.4%	18.3%	18.0%	19.0%	20.7%			
	Graduated in 4 yrs	22.5%	22.4%	22.6%	24.1%				
	Graduated in 5 yrs	25.0%	25.3%	24.8%					
	Graduated in 6 yrs	27.6%	26.4%						
Took any remedial course	N	3,646	3,736	3,817	4,264	4,986	4,979	4,842	4,536
	Pct of cohort	74%	73%	74%	73%	75%	71%	69%	70%
	Graduated in 2 yrs	1.0%	0.8%	1 1%	0.9%	1.2%	1.2%		
	Graduated in 3 yrs	7.8%	7.7%	7.6%	7.8%	8.3%			
	Graduated in 4 yrs	13.2%	13.6%	12.9%	13.3%				
	Graduated in 5 yrs	16 2%	16.1%	15 8%					
	Graduated in 6 yrs	17.7%	17.5%						
Took remedial English	N	2,625	2,688	2,724	3,120	3,711	3,669	3,391	3,227
	Pct of cohort	53%	53%	53%	53%	56%	52%	48%	50%
	Graduated in 2 yrs	0.3%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.8%	0.8%		
	Graduated in 3 yrs	6.6%	7.7%	6.3%	7.2%	7.7%			
	Graduated in 4 yrs	12.4%	13.8%	11.9%	13.0%				
	Graduated in 5 yrs	15.7%	16.3%	14.9%					
	Graduated in 6 yrs	17.2%	17.9%						
Took remedial math	N	2,688	2,714	2,771	3,077	3,665	3,796	3,808	3,592
	Pct of cohort	55%	53%	54%	53%	55%	54%	54%	55%
	Graduated in 2 yrs	1.0%	0.8%	1.1%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%		
	Graduated in 3 yrs	7.3%	6.3%	7.3%	6.4%	7.1%			
	Graduated in 4 yrs	12.4%	12.0%	12.0%	11.7%				
	Graduated in 5 yrs	15.1%	14.3%	14.7%					
	Graduated in 6 yrs	16.4%	15.5%						
Took lower level dev. math	N	1,359	1,435	1,426	1,561	1,861	1,761	1,766	1,567
	Pct of cohort	28%	28%	28%	27%	28%	25%	25%	24%
	Graduated in 2 yrs	1.0%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%		
	Graduated in 3 yrs	5.7%	4.3%	4.8%	4.0%	5.7%			
	Graduated in 4 yrs	10.5%	9.6%	10.0%	8.8%				
	Graduated in 5 yrs	13.3%	12.1%	12.4%					
	Graduated in 6 yrs	14.0%	13 5%						

Cohorts do not include students who enter in summer terms and also restrict the population only to associate's degree-seeking students, as a result, figures will not exactly match federal graduation rate surveys, although the population here is largely comparable to that group College ready indicates students successfully placed into courses that count toward their degree in math and English

Table 3. Placement and Enrollment in Remedial Courses with Transfer-Out Rates to 4-Year Institutions, Community College First-Time, Full-Time Associate's Degree-Seeking Students only (table does not count transfer if student completed an associate's degree)

		Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
Total Cohort	N	4,910	5,091	5,140	5,842	6,629	6,994	7,018	6,484
Placement / Course Enrollment during First Term									
College Ready	N	533	624	674	667	734	969	1,018	887
	Pct of cohort	11%	12%	13%	11%	11%	14%	15%	14%
Transferred no degree in 2 yrs		10.3%	8.7%	11.3%	10.9%	8.0%	10.4%		
Transferred no degree in 3 yrs		16.7%	14.9%	18.5%	18 0%	13.9%			
Transferred no degree in 4 yrs		20.6%	20.0%	23.9%	22.2%				
Transferred no degree in 5 yrs		22.7%	21.0%	25 5%					
Transferred no degree in 6 yrs		23.8%	22.1%						
Took any remedial course	N	3,646	3,736	3,817	4,264	4,986	4,979	4,842	4,536
	Pct of cohort	74%	73%	74%	73%	75%	71%	69%	70%
Transferred no degree in 2 yrs		5.3%	6.0%	5.6%	5.7%	5.4%	5 2%		
Transferred no degree in 3 yrs		10.0%	11.1%	10.4%	10.1%	10.0%			
Transferred no degree in 4 yrs		13.0%	14.7%	13.5%	13.8%				
Transferred no degree in 5 yrs		15 5%	17 0%	15.2%					
Transferred no degree in 6 yrs		17 0%	18.1%						
Took remedial English	N	2,625	2,688	2,724	3,120	3,711	3,669	3,391	3,227
	Pct of cohort	53%	53%	53%	53%	56%	52%	48%	50%
Transferred no degree in 2 yrs		5.4%	5.7%	4.7%	4.7%	5.1%	4.8%		
Transferred no degree in 3 yrs		9.7%	10.1%	9.1%	9.0%	9.8%			
Transferred no degree in 4 yrs		12.9%	13.3%	12.2%	12.9%				
Transferred no degree in 5 yrs		15.5%	15.5%	13.5%					
Transferred no degree in 6 yrs		16.8%	16.7%						
Took remedial math	N	2,688	2,714	2,771	3,077	3,665	3,796	3,808	3,592
	Pct of cohort	55%	53%	54%	53%	55%	54%	54%	55%
Transferred no degree in 2 yrs		5.1%	5.9%	5.8%	6.0%	5.1%	5.0%		
Transferred no degree in 3 yrs		9 6%	10.7%	10.6%	10.2%	9.7%			
Transferred no degree in 4 yrs		12.2%	14.4%	13.4%	13.6%				
Transferred no degree in 5 yrs		14.8%	16.9%	15 0%					
Transferred no degree in 6 yrs		16.5%	17.9%						
Took lower level dev. math	N	1,359	1,435	1,426	1,561	1,861	1,761	1,766	1,567
	Pct of cohort	28%	28%	28%	27%	28%	25%	25%	24%
Transferred no degree in 2 yrs		4.7%	4.5%	5.2%	5.1%	4.8%	4 1%		
Transferred no degree in 3 yrs		8.2%	8.4%	9.4%	9.3%	8.8%			
Transferred no degree in 4 yrs		10.8%	11.8%	11 7%	12.1%				
Transferred no degree in 5 yrs		13.8%	14.3%	13 2%					
Transferred no degree in 6 yrs		15.7%	15.2%						

Cohorts do not include students who enter in summer terms and also restrict the population only to associate's degree-seeking students, as a result, figures will not exactly match federal graduation rate surveys, although the population here is largely comparable to that group Students counted as transferring to a four-year institution are those who did not receive an associate's degree, so as to provide an unduplicated count The actual number of transfers is slightly higher than the rates presented here College ready indicates students successfully placed into courses that count toward their degree in math and English

Table 4. Placement and Enrollment in Remedial Courses with Graduation Rates plus Transfer-Out Rates to 4-Year Institutions, Community College First-Time, Full-Time Associate's Degree-Seeking Students only (table provides an unduplicated count and does not count transfer if student completed an associate's degree)

		Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
Total Cohort	N	4,910	5,091	5,140	5,842	6,629	6,994	7,018	6,484
Placement / Course Enrollment during First Term									
College Ready	N	533	624	674	667	734	969	1,018	887
	Pct of cohort	11%	12%	13%	11%	11%	14%	15%	14%
Graduated + Transferred in 2 yrs		16.9%	14.6%	16.8%	19.3%	16.2%	17.0%		
Graduated + Transferred in 3 yrs		35 1%	33 2%	36.5%	37.0%	34 6%			
Graduated + Transferred in 4 yrs		43 1%	42.4%	46.5%	46.3%				
Graduated + Transferred in 5 yrs		47.7%	46.3%	50.3%					
Graduated + Transferred in 6 yrs		51.4%	48.5%						
Took any remedial course	N	3,646	3,736	3,817	4,264	4,986	4,979	4,842	4,536
	Pct of cohort	74%	73%	74%	73%	75%	71%	69%	70%
Graduated + Transferred in 2 yrs		6.3%	6.8%	6.7%	6.6%	6.6%	6 4%		
Graduated + Transferred in 3 yrs		17.8%	18.8%	18.0%	17.9%	18.3%			
Graduated + Transferred in 4 yrs		26.2%	28.3%	26.4%	27 1%				
Graduated + Transferred in 5 yrs		31.7%	33.1%	31.0%					
Graduated + Transferred in 6 yrs		34.7%	35.6%						
Took remedial English	N	2,625	2,688	2,724	3,120	3,711	3,669	3,391	3,227
	Pct of cohort	53%	53%	53%	53%	56%	52%	48%	50%
Graduated + Transferred in 2 yrs		5.7%	6.3%	5.2%	5.2%	5.9%	5.6%		
Graduated + Transferred in 3 yrs		16.3%	17.8%	15.4%	16.2%	17.5%			
Graduated + Transferred in 4 yrs		25.3%	27.1%	24.1%	25.9%				
Graduated + Transferred in 5 yrs		31.2%	31.8%	28.4%					
Graduated + Transferred in 6 yrs		34.0%	34.6%						
Took remedial math	N	2,688	2,714	2,771	3,077	3,665	3,796	3,808	3,592
	Pct of cohort	55%	53%	54%	53%	55%	54%	54%	55%
Graduated + Transferred in 2 yrs		6.1%	6.7%	6.9%	6.9%	6 0%	5.9%		
Graduated + Transferred in 3 yrs		16.9%	17.0%	17.9%	16.6%	16.8%			
Graduated + Transferred in 4 yrs		24.6%	26.4%	25 4%	25.3%				
Graduated + Transferred in 5 yrs		29.9%	31.2%	29.7%					
Graduated + Transferred in 6 yrs		32.9%	33.4%						
Took lower level dev. math	N	1,359	1,435	1,426	1,561	1,861	1,761	1,766	1,567
	Pct of cohort	28%	28%	28%	27%	28%	25%	25%	24%
Graduated + Transferred in 2 yrs		5.7%	5.1%	5.8%	5.6%	5.4%	4 5%		
Graduated + Transferred in 3 yrs		13.9%	12.7%	14.2%	13.3%	14.5%			
Graduated + Transferred in 4 yrs		21 3%	21.4%	21.7%	20.9%				
Graduated + Transferred in 5 yrs		27.1%	26.4%	25.6%					
Graduated + Transferred in 6 yrs		29.7%	28.7%						

Cohorts do not include students who enter in summer terms and also restrict the population only to associate's degree-seeking students, as a result, figures will not exactly match federal graduation rate surveys, although the population here is largely comparable to that group Students counted as transferring to a four-year institution are those who did not receive an associate's degree, so as to provide an unduplicated count The actual number of transfers is slightly higher than the rates presented here. College ready indicates students successfully placed into courses that count toward their degree in math and English.

Table 5. Placement and Enrollment in Remedial Courses, Connecticut State University First-Time, Full-Time Degree-Seeking Students

		Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
Total Cohort	N	4,573	4,498	4,496
Placement				
College Ready	N	3,093	3,048	2,957
	Pct	68%	68%	66%
Placed into Remedial English	N	203	260	166
	Pct	4%	6%	4%
Placed into Remedial Math	N	1,387	1,330	1,471
	Pct	30%	30%	33%
Course Enrollment in First Semester				
Took no remedial courses	N	3,515	3,565	3,681
	Pct	77%	79%	82%
Took any remedial course	N	1,058	933	815
	Pct	23%	21%	18%
Took remedial English	N	145	158	89
	Pct	3%	4%	2%
Took remedial math	N	961	834	752
	Pct	21%	19%	17%

Insufficient time has elapsed to compare graduation rates for students entering in these semesters

Prepared by the Office of Policy and Research
February 16, 2012

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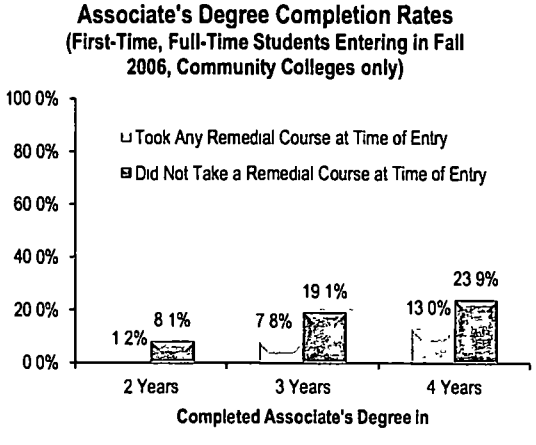
President

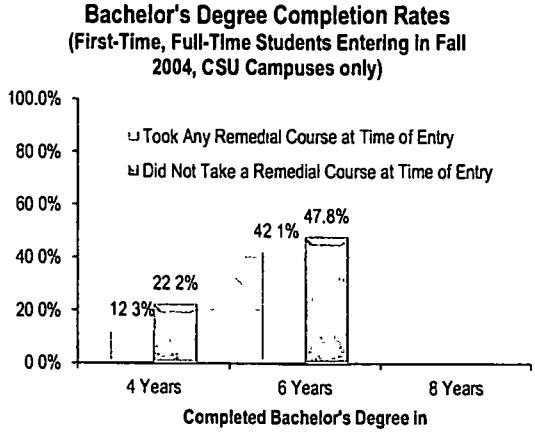
Completion Rates of Students Taking Remedial Coursework
(from Complete College America)

As one of six states to participate in the Complete College America Academy in fall 2011, Connecticut prepared at set of metrics for all public institutions in the state disaggregated by a number of categories beyond what is reported in the federal graduation rate survey; completion rates of students taking remedial coursework was among these metrics.

Unsurprisingly, students who took remedial coursework upon entry graduated at lower rates than did students who did not. At the community colleges, the three-year graduation rate of students seeking associate's degrees and entering as full-time students in fall 2006 was 10.8% overall, but just 7.8% of students who took remedial courses upon entry completed their associate's degree within three years. By contrast, 19.1% of students who did not take remedial courses in their first term completed an associate's degree in three years. These proportions each increased by 4-5 percentage points when allowing another year for completion.[1]

At the Connecticut State Universities, a similar pattern was observed, although the gap between students taking remedial courses and those not taking these courses was smaller. For the cohort of full-time, first-time students entering in fall 2004, the overall six-year graduation rate was 46.0%. For those students taking remedial courses upon entry, the six-year graduation rate was 42.1%, but for those not taking remedial courses, the six-year graduation rate was 47.8%.





[1] These figures will differ slightly from an accompanying report based on data directly extracted from the Community Colleges Data Warehouse because of minor definitional differences in reporting for Complete College America, but the overarching pattern remains the same.

Connecticut Community Colleges

Connecticut State University System

CharterOak STATE COLLEGE

Graduation Rates of Connecticut Community College Students Seeking Associate's Degrees Entering in Fall 2006

Enrollment Status and Remedial Course Enrollment at Entry	Beginning Cohort (Headcount)	Completed in 2 Years (100% normal time)		Completed in 3 Years (150% normal time)		Completed in 4 Years (200% normal time)	
	N	N	Pct	N	Pct	N	Pct
Full-Time, First-Time	5,272	163	3 1%	571	10 8%	840	15 9%
Took Any Remedial Course at Time of Entry	3,860	48	1.2%	301	7.8%	502	13 0%
Did Not Take a Remedial Course at Time of Entry	1,412	115	8 1%	270	19 1%	338	23 9%
Part-Time, First-Time	2,875	58	2 0%	115	4 0%	207	7.2%
Took Any Remedial Course at Time of Entry	1,813	10	0.6%	31	1 7%	77	4 2%
Did Not Take a Remedial Course at Time of Entry	1,062	48	4.5%	84	7.9%	130	12 2%

Graduation Rates of Connecticut State University Students Seeking Bachelor's Degrees Entering in Fall 2004

Enrollment Status and Remedial Course Enrollment at Entry	Beginning Cohort (Headcount)	Completed in 4 Years (100% normal time)		Completed in 6 Years (150% normal time)		Completed in 8 Years (200% normal time)	
	N	N	Pct	N	Pct	N	Pct
Full-Time, First-Time	4,272	820	19 2%	1,967	46 0%	NA	NA
Took Any Remedial Course at Time of Entry	1,305	160	12 3%	549	42.1%	NA	NA
Did Not Take a Remedial Course at Time of Entry	2,967	660	22 2%	1,418	47 8%	NA	NA
Part-Time, First-Time	270	15	5 6%	48	17 8%	NA	NA
Took Any Remedial Course at Time of Entry	22	<5	–	<5	–	NA	NA
Did Not Take a Remedial Course at Time of Entry	248	>10	–	>40	–	NA	NA

Remedial course placement policies varied across institutions in fall 2006. Reporting follows guidelines for Complete College America Attribution to full-time and part-time status and enrollment in a remedial course are as of the first term of entry, and students may change enrollment status over the course of their studies The University of Connecticut reported that no students were enrolled in remedial courses. Source. Connecticut pilot data submission to Complete College America in fall 2011.

Important contextual note: lower degree completion rates at the associate's and bachelor's levels for full-time are associated with taking remedial courses in the first semester, but this correlation should not be interpreted as causality. Substantial research has conclusively demonstrated that student academic inputs are the most important factor related to completion rates. A recent national study of 210,056 first-time, full-time undergraduate students attending 356 not-for-profit institutions illustrates this pattern across a number of such inputs including high school grades.

Source: DeAngelo, et al (2011). Completing College: Assessing Graduation Rates at Four-Year Institutions. Higher Education Research Institute. University of California, Los Angeles
http //heri ucla edu/DARCU/CompletingCollege2011 pdf

National Graduation Rates at 4-Year Institutions by HS Grades

HS Grade Average	Weighted Percentage of Students Who Received Bachelor's Degrees Within 4 Years	6 Years
A+, A	58 3%	79 3%
A-	47 8%	70.6%
B+	35.9%	59.8%
B	25.2%	48 7%
B-	15 5%	36.6%
C+	9.8%	27.7%
C or less	6.3%	21 2%

Connecticut's participation in Complete College America was a pilot project in fall 2011, and reporting focused on cohorts entering in 2004 for bachelor's-seeking students and 2006 for associate's seeking students, while states that fully participated in the project reported on cohorts entering in 2002 and 2004 respectively. Nevertheless, data can be considered roughly comparable since change in completion rates over time has historically been modest at the state level .Connecticut's 3-year completion rates for full-time students seeking associate's degrees and took remedial courses upon entry ranked #21 out of 28 participating states; for full-time students seeking bachelor's degrees who took remedial courses upon entry ranked #7 out of 26 participating states.

Three- and Six-Year Graduation Rates of Full -Time Students Enrolling in Remedial Education Upon Entry

	Associate's Degrees				Bachelor's Degrees			
State	Entry Cohort Started 2004 †	Graduated in three years		Rank (out of 28)	Entry Cohort Started in 2002 †	Graduated in six years		Rank (out of 26)
Arizona	NP	NP	NP	--	NP	NP	NP	--
Arkansas	4,219	396	9.4%	16	4,316	955	22 1%	22
California (Cal State Only)	NP	NP	NP	--	23,080	10,620	46 0%	5
Colorado	3,061	281	9 2%	17	1,734	377	21.7%	23
Connecticut †	3,860	301	7.8%	21	1,305	549	42 1%	7
Florida	NP	NP	NP	--	NP	NP	NP	--
Georgia	5,701	410	7.2%	22	1,132	280	24 7%	19
Hawaii	1,852	191	10 3%	11	13	DS	DS	--
Idaho	635	81	12.8%	7	938	196	20.9%	25
Illinois	12,891	1,806	14 0%	4	3,360	916	27.3%	18
Indiana	5,106	470	9 2%	17	5,624	2,318	41.2%	8
Kentucky	4,104	226	5.5%	26	5,659	1,819	32 1%	14
Louisiana	3,992	109	2.7%	28	5,491	1,223	22.3%	21
Maryland	6,019	603	10 0%	13	2,010	980	48.8%	4
Massachusetts	6,756	693	10.3%	11	2,028	1,038	51.2%	1
Minnesota	NP	NP	NP	--	NP	NP	NP	--
Mississippi	8,953	1,188	13 3%	6	1,888	686	36.3%	12
Missoun	6,178	775	12 5%	9	968	205	21 2%	24
Nevada	825	80	9 7%	14	223	82	36.8%	11
New Hampshire	NP	NP	NP	--	NP	NP	NP	--
New Mexico*	4,757	326	6.9%	23	4,408	303	6.9%	26
North Carolina	7,822	762	9.7%	14	3,209	1,586	49 4%	3
Ohio	14,988	955	6 4%	24	7,760	2,625	33 8%	13
Oklahoma	6,385	587	9 2%	17	2,675	819	30.6%	16
Oregon	2,970	410	13 8%	5	1,257	635	50.5%	2
Pennsylvania (PASSHE system only)	NP	NP	NP	--	NP	NP	NP	--
South Dakota**	200	11	5 5%	26	1,298	489	37.7%	10
Tennessee	8,017	1,006	12 6%	8	4,996	2,220	44.4%	6
Texas	35,974	2,080	5.8%	25	14,385	4,263	29 6%	17
Utah	2,525	1,304	51.6%	1	312	73	23 4%	20
Virginia	6,520	801	12 0%	10	721	292	40 0%	9
Washington	8,806	1,997	22.7%	2	NP	NP	NP	--
West Virginia	2,450	207	8.4%	20	2,700	859	31 8%	15
Wyoming	1,560	339	21.7%	3	NP	NP	NP	--

†Connecticut participated in Complete College America Data Collection as a pilot project in fall 2011 and reported data for the entering 2006 cohort for students seeking associate's degrees and entering in 2004 for those seeking bachelor's degree The University of Connecticut reported not offering remedial coursework and so figures here represent only the community colleges and the CSU campuses

* New Mexico data show graduation rates for two years, rather than 1 5 years.

** South Dakota reported data from Board of Regents only, which does not include any two-year-only colleges

NP = The state did not provide data for this metric

DS = Fewer than 10 students, so data were suppressed

Data Source Complete College America, Time is the Enemy (2011), pp 40-41 http://www completecollege org/docs/Time_Is_the_Enemy_Tables pdf

Prepared by the Office of Policy and Research
February 15, 2012

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF REGENTS
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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Robert A. Kennedy
President

Success in Remedial Courses

Of first-time students entering the state's community colleges in fall 2008, just over half (55%) of students taking remedial math only, completed all of their remedial coursework within two years, and two-thirds (65%) of those taking remedial English only completed all of their remedial coursework within two years. Success rates were lower when taking both remedial math and English, with just over a third (36%) completing all of their remedial courses within two years.

Of first-time students entering the Connecticut State Universities in fall 2008, about seven out of eight (87%) of students taking remedial math only, completed all of their remedial coursework within two years, and more than nine out of ten (92%) of those taking remedial English only completed all of their remedial coursework within two years. Success rates were slightly lower when taking both remedial math and English, with just over three quarters (77%) completing all of their remedial courses within two years.

Rates of completing remedial courses in the community colleges are lower than those in four-year institutions because in many instances students must pass courses two or three levels below college level courses before proceeding to a course that will count toward the degree at the 100-level.

Students Completing All Required Remedial Courses within 2 Years of Entry (Of Those Taking Remedial Courses in Fall 2008)

	Two-Year Colleges			Four-Year Colleges		
	Math Only	English Only	Math & English	Math Only	English Only	Math & English
All Students	55%	65%	36%	87%	92%	77%
Hispanic Students	44%	66%	34%	81%	93%	72%
African American Students	42%	58%	29%	80%	86%	85%
White Students	59%	67%	40%	89%	94%	78%
Other Races	60%	69%	38%	84%	--*	--*
Directly from HS (Age 17-19)	52%	67%	36%	87%	93%	78%
Age 25 and Over	63%	63%	40%	--*	--*	--*
Age 20-24	51%	59%	30%	--*	--*	--*
Pell Grant Recipients (at entry)	49%	63%	31%	84%	91%	86%

* Cell sizes are too small (less than 30) to generate meaningful comparisons

Connecticut participated in the Complete College America (CCA) data collection for context, outcomes, and progress metrics for the first time in August and September 2010 CCA requested that states provide these data for students entering institutions in fall 2006, but CT provided data for students entering in fall 2008 because placement practices were more uniform and more recent For metrics on remediation, the University of Connecticut and Charter Oak State College did not enroll students in remedial courses in Fall 2008, further, Charter Oak State College did not enroll first-time students, only transfer students Four-year institution totals for remediation represent only students in the CSU System

Definition: entering first-time undergraduate students who complete remedial education courses in math, English/reading, or both within two academic years **Remedial Math Only:** students who complete all required courses in remedial math within two academic years divided by all first-time degree or certificate-seeking students enrolled in remedial math course(s) during the first academic year. **Remedial English/Reading Only:** students who complete all required courses in remedial English/reading within two academic years divided by all first-time degree or certificate-seeking students enrolled in remedial English/reading course(s) during the first academic year **Both Remedial Math and English:** remedial students (denominator) who complete all required courses in remedial English/reading and math within two academic years divided by all first-time degree or certificate-seeking students enrolled in both remedial English/reading and math course(s) during the first academic year

Source Connecticut submission to Complete College America, September 2011

Smarter Balanced
Assessment Consortium

Smarter Balanced and Policymakers: Creating College- and Career-Ready Assessments

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is creating next-generation tests aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts/literacy and mathematics that will be available by the 2014-15 school year. The assessment system includes a rigorous computer adaptive summative test for grades 3-8 and 11 that provides accurate student performance and growth information to meet state and federal accountability requirements. In addition, optional computer adaptive interim assessments and formative resources aligned to the CCSS give teachers and principals the tools to help students meet today's college- and career-ready standards.

Key Features of Smarter Balanced

- **A college- and career-ready evaluation** based on the CCSS with results that are comparable nationwide and internationally benchmarked.
- **Innovative item types** go beyond multiple choice questions to include constructed response and performance tasks that measure critical thinking and problem solving.
- **Support for Common Core** implementation, including membership for Governing States in the Council of Chief State School Officers' Implementing CCSS state collaborative and a digital library of curriculum resources and instructional best practices for educators.

State-led Governance

Smarter Balanced is a state-led consortium, with governing authority flowing from state education chiefs and elected officials. Each state appoints K-12 and higher education leads to coordinate with the Consortium. State representatives direct the Executive Committee and participate in 10 Smarter Balanced work groups. Policy decisions are made by Governing States while Advisory States benefit by sharing resources and access to national experts and technical advisors.

Support for Implementation

Smarter Balanced is committed to addressing the concerns of states and ensuring a successful transition to new assessments. A technology readiness tool will allow states to estimate future information technology needs. A paper-and-pencil version of the assessments will be available during a three-year transition period. In addition, the Consortium will also provide professional development and training for teams of educators from each state.

State Implementation Timeline

- 2011-2012 School Year—Technology readiness tool available
- Winter/Spring 2013—Pilot testing of summative and interim assessments
- Spring 2014—Field testing of summative and interim assessments
- 2014-15 School Year—Implementation of assessment system and launch of digital library

LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED

Visit SmarterBalanced.org to learn more about the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and sign-up to receive our monthly eNewsletter. For more information, please contact Info@SmarterBalanced.org.

Connecticut Higher Education Lead:
Michael Meotti, Executive Vice President
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These programs include:

- An annual Young Writers Conference, a five-day experience that culminates with public reading of participants' work followed by an autograph party.
- Enrichment Days that bring students from Rogers Park and Broadview Middle Schools in Danbury and Bethel Middle School for enrichment across academic disciplines from the arts and sciences; students are organized into teams named for famous scientists, mathematicians or inventors.
- Camp College in August, during which students from the same three middle schools participate in a program with courses in chemistry, biology, math and writing taught by WCSU faculty in our laboratories and classrooms. Students eat in our cafeterias and learn what college is like. NASA has partnered with us on this program.
- The Junior Meteorology Program, a semester-long program in which eighth-graders work with students from our Meteorology program to learn weather forecasting skills and present their own on-air predictions. Dr. Mel Goldstein would be proud!

It will be most interesting to see how these programs affect college readiness as the participants approach high school graduation; we expect favorable results.

We believe that intervention based on measurement of students' academic proficiency produces results, and so support H.B. 5029. But we also note the importance of the nature and timing of such intervention and stress the importance of the sort of open, collegial partnership that exists between WCSU, Bethel and Danbury faculty. Bridges works because long ago we collectively decided that we all own the problem of remediation.

We intend to add at least one more school district to the partnership in the near future and also hope to develop a center or institute to offer what we have learned to colleagues across the state. Thanks to previous state support and generous help from local corporations, we are encouraged about this prospect.

Thank you for your attention. I hope this description of our experiences at Western adds some context to your deliberation on this important topic.

My name is Jason B. Jones, and I am an associate professor of English at Central Connecticut State University, where I am also the president of the American Association of University Professors chapter.

Senator Bye, Representative Willis, and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 40: An Act Concerning Open Access to College-Level Courses.

Over the past several decades, debates over remediation in higher education have mounted in intensity. Students and parents are often concerned about spending money, or taking on loan debt, for courses that don't count toward graduation. Critics of public higher education argue that the *apparent* rise in remediation suggests that higher education is "dumbing down" its curriculum. And other critics argue either that placement tests are inadequately predictive of graduation rates, or that students who've been through remediation don't show markedly improved graduation rates.

Today I want to highlight two concerns, one about the critiques of remediation, and the other about the proposed solution.

1. **Multi-factor studies, as opposed to think tank reports, *do not show* that remediation is an impediment to success.** It is true that students who place into remediation have lower graduation rates. Critics infer from this that remediation is a barrier, and if we eliminate it, graduation rates will go up.

There is bad news on this front, however: In studies that add another factor about the student's pre-college academic background--usually weak high school preparation, the allegedly harmful effects of remediation fade into the noise. (See Attewell, et al., who argue that controlling for pre-existing skill differences entirely explains the variable graduation rates associated with remedial courses, esp. for underprivileged and for community college students.)

I know that the committee is also looking today at measures to improve college readiness in high schools. Those measures are the ones that are likely to prove efficacious.

2. The proposed change is too dramatic, especially given the uncertainty about the cause of these problems.

Students who are able to take courses for which they are not prepared will fail them more frequently. This will particularly be a problem in STEM and social science courses, which rely on math as a prerequisite or co-requisite. Faculty members will have to judge whether a student's struggles arise from failing to master the content or from the need for math or writing remediation. The latter is a real challenge, one for which few faculty members are trained: Writers' prose falls apart when learning new content.

Discerning the need for remediation from a more typical engagement with new material isn't apparent.

It would also require a massive redeployment of university resources away from teaching faculty, and towards either peer- or other tutors, or (as is rumored) third-party solutions, including ones marketed by those trumpeting the failure of remediation.

Finally, I would say that there are other, simpler models. At Rider University, for example, "remediation" was abolished, and students now place into math and English courses as they do into foreign languages. The notion of sequence is preserved, but students are not taking classes for which they get no credit. I am sure that other interesting models exist, and I look forward to a productive dialogue about this going forward.

Cite:

Attewell, Paul A., David E. Lavin, Thurston Domina, and Tania Levey. "New Evidence on College Remediation." *Journal of Higher Education* 77.5 (Sept.-Oct 2006): 886-924).

EASTERN
CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY

Testimony by Rita Malenczyk
Eastern Connecticut State University
Before the Higher Education and
Employment Advancement Committee
February 16, 2012

Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. For the record, I am Rita Malenczyk, Professor of English and Director of the Writing Program and Writing Center at Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU). I am also President-elect of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the national organization devoted to the administration and development of college writing programs. I am here to offer comments on Senate Bill 40, *An Act Concerning Open Access to College Level Courses*.

I have directed Eastern's writing program since 1994, and I would like to share with you some details of a course we developed on our campus over ten years ago which has been, we feel, extremely successful in meeting the needs of students who may not be as prepared as others for the writing demands of college. The course is called ENG 100Plus, and it allows students to receive college credit for one semester of work – the same amount of time required to complete the standard first-year writing class, English 100.

The goal in the standard first-year writing class at ECSU (English 100, College Writing) is to provide students with a solid set of writing skills and strategies that can serve them in college and the world of work. Because some students who attend Eastern are farther from this kind of self-sufficiency than others, as evidenced on their writing placement exams, the University provides additional instruction to help bring them up to speed. Until the fall of 2000, this additional instruction was generally provided through a course, entitled "Basic Writing Skills," which was offered through the Learning Resource Center. Students who placed into Basic Writing Skills were required to complete that course before moving on to English 100, College Writing.

In the fall semester of 1999, however, English 100P, College Writing *Plus* was piloted through the English department. After several successful pilot sections, the course was approved by the university's writing board, curriculum committee, and general education program committee. As of fall 2000, Basic Writing Skills was discontinued, and since then all so-called developmental writers have been enrolled in English 100Plus. This new class meets for five hours a week (two of these hours are designated "lab" time) and completes the first-year writing requirement just as the standard College Writing course does. The intention of English 100Plus is to allow students who need additional writing instruction to receive it in conjunction with English 100, thus completing their first-year writing requirement in one semester rather than two and at the cost of five rather than six credits.

During the two hours per week designated as lab time, students choose (with some guidance from the instructor) from a number of activities which will help them improve as writers. Lab is not simply a grammar drill workshop, although many students choose to do a variety of grammar exercises. The lab is structured to allow for individualized instruction based on the variety of needs of Eastern's underprepared writing students. In reviewing a sample of placement essays from 1998, we noted that students who placed into Basic Writing Skills had difficulties with insufficient development of ideas, tendency toward broad generalization, simplistic organization of ideas, sentence fragments, punctuation errors, mixed constructions, faulty predication, and errors in usage. The essays written by developmental students also exhibited other problems (lack of introduction or conclusion paragraphs, lack of focus, and false starts – indicated by large crossed out passages) that pointed to their inexperience as writers. These problems are typical of students who have not had a great deal of instruction in writing and/or whose experiences with writing instruction have been frustrating and demeaning. Such students do need more writing instruction than their peers in College Writing, then, but this extra instruction should not focus on issues of grammar alone. The lab component of College Writing Plus, therefore, is used for a variety of small-group and individual activities (from sentence-combining exercises to brainstorming sessions, from discussions of appropriate topics to collaborative writing of introductions) that help bring these students up to speed within the context of the real, college-level writing projects that are required for successful completion of the first-year writing requirement.

A key component of English 100Plus is the presence in the lab classroom of writing tutors. Two trained peer tutors are typically present in the classroom during lab time. They are also expected to hold "office hours" that allow for longer sessions with individual students.

Outcomes assessment has indicated that ENG 100Plus has been successful. English Department readers review portfolios of student writing at the end of each academic year, and our evidence indicates that students taking ENG 100Plus complete the course at the same level as those taking ENG 100. Furthermore, research conducted by Marsha Davis, a statistician on the ECSU faculty, shows that a high percentage of students who take that course pass it.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Testimony to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Re: SB40

Dr. Kevin Buterbaugh
Professor, Dept. of Political Science
Southern Connecticut State University
Buterbaughk1@southernct.edu

Senator Bye, Representative Willis, and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify about SB 40, AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN ACCESS TO COLLEGE LEVEL COURSES.

I assume that this act was proposed to lower the cost of higher education for students in Connecticut, and in the belief that it may help students move more easily towards graduation. I believe the Act will do neither of these. In fact, it will do the opposite.

CSU institutions are institutions of access. This means that many of our students have underdeveloped academic skills. We can see this in the fact that more than 60% of students entering the CSU system require at least one developmental or remedial course. These needs are not determined randomly or arbitrarily but through placements exams given to students either before or shortly after arriving on campus. Once a deficit is determined, the universities then require the student to take a developmental or remedial course in order to address the skill deficit.

The act currently proposed would allow students to enter courses without first addressing these skill deficits. Thus, a student at Southern would be allowed to enter MAT 107, our introductory statistics class, even though the student does not have the college algebra or other arithmetic skills needed for the class. The result would be the student failing the class. The same thing could occur with a student being allowed to enter the Freshman Composition class without first addressing a writing skill deficit. Again, failure is likely to result. No matter how much a course is recommended, if a student is not required to take it, many will choose to ignore the recommendation and try their chances at an introductory course that the student is ill prepared to complete or pass. These early failures for the student are likely to lead some students to leave the university. Even those who do not leave the university will now need to retake the failed classes in order to graduate. Most likely this will mean the student will have to pay more for her education than if he had to take a required remedial class before attempting the introductory class. At the same time, the Fs will never leave the student's transcript, thus impacting his employability when she leaves the university.

Perhaps there is a belief that a student with deficient skills can be given enough help in an introductory class to overcome these deficits. This is unlikely. For instance, introductory math courses have between 25 and 30 students at Southern. With classes this large, it is very difficult for an instructor to address a student's skill deficiencies. Moreover, asking an instructor to do this actually provides a disservice to the other students in the class, since they will receive less time and attention from the instructor to learn the course content. Finally, we do not want an introductory class turning into a developmental one. This would result in students leaving a math or composition class without obtaining the skills the classes were designed to impart

making the student less prepared for her field of study and less competitive in the work force upon graduation (if he was able to graduate).

Remedial and developmental courses are not designed to harm students. They are designed to help them succeed. If we fail to require that students address skill deficits before moving into the regular curriculum we will not be helping them towards a degree, but instead helping to insure they fail and perhaps never obtain a degree.

David Johnston
Line 9 Page 11

February 16, 2012: Testimony to Higher Education and Employment Committee
Re. SB 40, HB 5029 & HB 5028
David C-H Johnston, Education 'R We (educationRwe@gmail.com)

1. My background

   1) Many years working in youth development, including the last 10 years coordinating life skills learning for Casey Family Services, the Direct Services Arm of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, from which I just retired.

   2) My interest and focus now to turn my experience and remaining energy toward "access" and "success" in postsecondary education, especially for challenged students (e.g., first generation, lower-income youth, foster youth, LGBT youth, even military veterans).

   3) To this end, I will be partnering with Goodwin College, the National Center for First Year Experience, CAHS, Hartford Consortium for Higher Education, and others, to put on a conference on "Retention to Graduation", later this year.

2. Good ideas, if planned and implemented within a broader context, including financial feasibility.

   1) **SB 40** re. "any" student being able to take a credit course (vs. a remedial course). This makes a lot of sense as a way to encourage challenged students that they can succeed. But it only makes sense if schools, especially community colleges and state universities, can provide "remedial" support services – both academic support for deficits and non-academic support for learning how to be a college student – "campus competence". In other words, provide the remedial help outside the classroom, perhaps starting the summer before or through the types of bridge programs envisioned by the other two bills.

      Remedial education is often a dead-end for too many freshmen. They get discouraged. The President of one of our community colleges told me that of all the students that went into their lowest level of remedial course, only 7% ever got out of developmental education.

      In addition, as cited in "Fulfilling the Promise of Community Colleges", from the National Center for First Year Experience":

      Because self-concept and quality of life are intertwined with career choice, career development is an essential component of comprehensive first-year programs, especially in the community College...students who are more involved in thinking about their future careers have a better chance of pursuing the academic programs that can help them achieve their goals.[1]

In other words, tie first year experience programs directly to career interests and aptitudes, ideally identified before students set foot in freshmen classes, to give students a dose of reality tied to their interests, and tied into their future. College counselors can be trained in career development. Manchester Community College does an especially good job of this.[ii]

2) **HB 5029** re. "early readiness" for college, addressing achievement gaps, and developing "remediation plans" for students with deficit. Again, this is a very good idea, ideally even begun earlier. Many high schools already do this, more or less, and this should become stronger as the "Student Success Plan" model gets implemented. But such assessments are not necessarily connected, re. content, with college requirements. That takes a lot more work that not all school systems may be willing to do, which is why HB 5028 is a good idea.

3) **HB 5028** re. "bridge" programs and "alignment" in course materials between high schools and colleges, are now happening all over the country, and were highlighted in the P-20 Council's excellent publication, "Connecticut College and Career Readiness Toolkit", based on the good work done for Connecticut by the Educational Policy Improvement Center.[iii]

   Many of our state schools are doing this work, but some are in much deeper and longer than others, such as the "evidence-based" work being done at WCSU, where the retention numbers speak for themselves. The more recently begun partnership between MCC , Manchester High School and East Hartford High School also points to the value of such alignment.

   However, faculty and administrators at both levels – secondary and postsecondary – often resist such work for a variety of reasons: time, lack of financial incentives, professional pride. Perhaps this bill will lower barriers to an otherwise good idea and encourage more such partnerships, financial barriers notwithstanding.

3. Thus, I think these are ideas with promise, but that need further discussion among affected parties. Effective alignment and bridge programs are resource-intensive, and we do not need more "unfunded mandates".

   One of our community colleges has a good bridge program but will have to curtail it drastically without new funding – hence, the need for substantive State, and likely private philanthropic, support for significant expansion of such good ideas.

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[i] "Career Development: An Essential Component of First-Year Experience and Student Transitions", pp. 127 & 133, by Patricia Stanley, Chapter 9 in Fulfilling the Promise of Community Colleges," National Center for First Year Experience, 2011.

[ii] Ibid., p. 136.

[iii] See pp. 36-44, and profiles of bridge and alignment programs at MCC (p. 52) and WCSU (p. 53).

000472
Leon Brin
Line 15 page 11

Testimony to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Re: SB40
Dr. Leon Brin
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Senator Bye, Representative Willis, and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify about SB 40, AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN ACCESS TO COLLEGE LEVEL COURSES.

I accept the notion that students who are required to take remedial courses are less likely to complete a degree than are other students. However, the root cause is not that they are required to take remedial courses. It's that they come to college less well prepared than other students. Removing public institutions' right to require remedial classes would actually have an effect opposite the one desired. If this bill passes, students will be thrust into classes they are not prepared to take and instructors will be charged with the simultaneous tasks of bringing poorly prepared students up to speed and covering new material.

To see why that is a problem, let's look at the numbers at SCSU. In Fall 2011, SCSU had a freshman cohort of 1319 students. 503 (38%) of them scored less than 450 on their math SAT. History shows students who score this low are not ready for college mathematics. Consequently, they were placed into MAT 095 Elementary Algebra, a course that by any reasonable definition is remedial. It's hard to imagine what we are to do with nearly 40% of our freshman enrollment if we are not allowed to require remedial work. That population is simply too large to be properly accommodated in college math classes. Instructors do not have the resources to provide remedial training to 38% of their students during the course of teaching new material. Students in this 38% do not have the background to be successful in college math classes on their own. Forcing either of these scenarios practically guarantees that these 38% of incoming students will not be successful. Resources for a new way to provide remedial help are needed before a bill like this passes. To make the situation more alarming, one might argue that MAT 100 and MAT 102 (both of which are entitled Intermediate Algebra) are also remedial. They are not calculus. They are not pre-calculus. They are prerequisite for registering to take the University requirement in mathematics. In essence, they cover high school algebra. Counting these courses as remedial too, in Fall 2011 we required 1078 students (81%) to take remedial math.

In the absence of a new, fully supported, method of providing remedial training, we could be forced to turn away the roughly 40% to 80% of students who are not ready for college math classes. However, that practice is not consistent with our mission of access, part of which means accepting students who may not otherwise have the opportunity to go to college. And it is not consistent with the pressure to increase enrollments.

In conclusion, if this bill passes, at SCSU we are looking at the dilemma of how to bring roughly 40% to 80% of our incoming freshmen up to speed without remedial classes. The bill is in direct conflict with our missions of access and academic excellence.

Freshman Cohort Fall 2011

Math Placement

Course	Students
95	503
100	279
102	296
122	223
150	9
no placement	9
total	1319

SAT scores

Math SAT	Students
0-240	3
250-290	6
300-340	41
350-390	131
400-440	324
450-490	342
500-540	245
550-590	111
600-640	56
650-690	13
700-800	3
no score	44
total	1319

SCSU Mission Statement Southern Connecticut State University provides exemplary graduate and undergraduate education in the liberal arts and professional disciplines. As an intentionally diverse and comprehensive university, Southern is committed to academic excellence, access, social justice, and service for the public good.

1. S.B. No. 40 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN ACCESS TO COLLEGE LEVEL COURSES.

My name is Sharon Gusky and I am a biology professor at Northwestern Connecticut Community College. I also advise student in Phi Theta Kappa, the International Honor Society of Two-year college students. Remedial education provides students with the skills they need to succeed. The students who place into remedial English classes at Northwestern, scored a 450 or lower on the reading and writing portion of the SATs. To put this in perspective, freshman students entering UCONN score between 550-650 and those entering Central score between 460 and 550. This means that community colleges provide the only opportunity for these students to obtain a college degree and remedial education provides the pathway to success for those students. In the fall of 2011, 136 students enrolled in remedial English courses at Northwestern. Only 41 of these students placed into the top level of remedial education. These are the only students that would be eligible for a program like the Baltimore Learning project that I believe this bill is loosely designed after. What will happen to the other 95 students? Currently a number of students place into our lowest level English remedial English class. Students in the level are read at an 8th or lower level. These students and our professors are being asked to remediate 4 years of skills in just 2 semesters. That is a daunting task for both the students and instructors. Three years ago the success rate of these students was 28%. Which I found amazing, imagine jumping four grade levels, from 8th grade to college ready in just 2 semesters! The experience for these students is life changing! But our English faculty knew they could do better and they revised the curriculum so that students now take integrated reading and writing courses and now 42% of these students have the skills necessary to be successful in college level classes, in just 2 semesters. For them this is a life changing experience, they can succeed in college, become honors students, obtain a college degree and become skilled members of Connecticut's workforce. Some of these students even go on to get their bachelors degree at UCONN and Central, places that had previously rejected their application or even Trinity and Wesleyan- places they never dreamed they could go. These students would not be successful without remedial education. Allowing students to enter college level classes unprepared sets them up to fail; Remedial education, the stepping stone to success, changes lives. I urge the committee to find another way to deal with their concerns about remedial education.

000476
David Downes
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CAACE

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

February 15, 2012

Testimony on the following bills:

Raised Bill 5028: AN ACT CONCERNING THE ALIGNMENT OF COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS WITH COLLEGE CURRICULUM

Raised Bill 40: AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN ACCESS TO COLLEGE LEVEL COURSES

Submitted by: David Downes, Vice President, Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education and Director of Adult and Continuing Education for the West Hartford Public Schools

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education, a statewide professional organization representing provider of mandated adult education.

Representative Willis, Senator Bye and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

All three of the bills before this committee today speak to the issue of college readiness, an issue that adult education programs contend with regularly as we serve almost 4,000 adult students yearly who attain a high school diploma credential, plus over 10,000 more students annually who are in the process of earning a diploma. As Vice President of the Connecticut Association of Adult and Continuing Education, **I would like to speak briefly in favor of raised bills SB 40 and HB 5028.**

Raised Bill 5028 would ensure a dialog between those at the secondary level, who will be implementing the recently revised Common Core State Standards, and those higher education institutions that receive many of their students. While the new Common Core Standards were developed explicitly to ensure postsecondary academic readiness, it would be wise to directly involve our higher education institutions in the implementation of those standards so as to promote the communication that is often lacking, throughout the state, between colleges and secondary schools. We in adult education are in similar discussions in aligning the content standards of our instruction with the common core at all grade levels, and particularly with the secondary standards as the GED test is being realigned with these same core standards. All three of our secondary education completion programs are necessarily affected by the adoption of the new common core standards, and adult education programs would also benefit from the communication with those in higher education that this bill proposes.

Raised Bill 40 would directly and positively affect our adult education secondary graduates who too often cannot access credit-bearing college courses without spending semesters of time and money on non-credit bearing, remedial courses at the college after enrollment. Often the sole determining factor in the decision requiring students to take remedial courses is the "gatekeeper" Accuplacer test, an online, computer administered assessment that has a reputation of not providing adequate feedback on what specific skills students need to develop. While the resources of state postsecondary schools are stretched thin with the high demand for admissions, this gatekeeper system is too arbitrary and too frustrating for many students to persist toward better education and a brighter future.

This bill proposes a system of tandem support for students in need *while they are in* entry level, credit-bearing college courses, which would allow students to begin their college program in an interest area that can better motivate them to persist and complete a full program of study. Such a system would also allow students to conserve Pell Grant funds and other financial aid for credit-bearing course work so that money is less likely to run out before a program can be completed.