

Testimony for the
Appropriations Committee
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Albertus Magnus College
February 15, 2017

On behalf of Albertus Magnus College, I am submitting testimony in opposition to the budget proposal which seeks to cut \$2.2million (6%) in FY 18 and \$4.4 million (12%) in FY 19 from the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program.

I would like to first thank the legislature's ongoing support to the private non-profit sector of higher education by continuing to fund of the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program. I understand that the state is facing very significant fiscal challenges that require each agency and nearly every program to incur budgetary cuts; however, please hear my request to not cut the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program any further. The program invests in some of our state's brightest and neediest students as they attend a College that best suits their educational needs.

Albertus Magnus College has experienced a 68% reduction in funding between the first year of the Scholarship Program in 2013-2014 and now, totaling just under \$1 million cut. Albertus Magnus College is a strong supporter of Connecticut students, investing an average of \$16,000 institutional grant dollars per traditional day student, with close to 92% of day students receiving financial aid. 86% of the aid recipients are from the state of Connecticut 55% of which are also Pell eligible. We were only able to help out 36% of our Pell eligible population with state funding based on our current allocation. With the estimated allocations of the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program for 2017-2018, it will only be possible for us to help 26% of that population.

It is our mission as a College to provide students with access and opportunities to education in the classroom and beyond. Limiting the funding to the Roberta Willis Scholarship hinders our ability to assist low-income students in achieving their dreams. Please do not adopt the Governor's recommendations to further cut this beneficial program. Thank you.