

**Testimony of Goodwin College in opposition to the Budget Cuts to the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program in the Governor's Proposed FY 2018-2019 Budget.**

**Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Regarding the Governor's Proposed FY 2018-2019 Budget  
February 15, 2017**

Goodwin College, a private non-profit higher educational institution located in East Hartford, with over 3,500 students (97% CT Residents) coming from 136 Connecticut cities and towns strongly opposes the proposed further cuts to the Roberta Willis Scholarship contained in the Governor's Proposed Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Budget.

Many of our students are in a borderline poverty situation. In a typical year it is not uncommon to have approximately one-third of Goodwin students and their families categorized in the "\$0-\$0" Expected Family Contribution (EFC) range meaning they have no assets to help off-set the costs of their college education. Accordingly, the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program is critical to those students' ability to begin, sustain and complete a college education.

That noted poverty level, along with a high level of part-time students (87%), allows Goodwin to reach a significant number of needy students annually which is a goal of the Willis Scholarship Program.

Goodwin has seen a significant drop in the previously named Governor's Scholarship and now Roberta Willis Scholarship funding over the past three state budget cycles as follows:

**FY 2013-2014** - Goodwin Students received \$1.7M in Willis Scholarship funding which was distributed to some 1600 students with an average award of \$1,100.

**FY 2015-2016** - Goodwin's funding was reduced by some \$850K (or 48%) to approximately \$900K with an average award of \$723.00.

**FY 2016-2017** – Goodwin's funding was further reduced by some \$228K (or 25%) to \$673K with an average student award of \$535.00.

**Summary** – Over the past three CT FY Budget cycles Goodwin has experienced a reduction of approximately \$1.1M or approximately 62% in the Roberta Willis Scholarship Funding.

Exacerbating the erosion of Goodwin funding, and other private, non-profit schools, is the on-going decision of the Office of Higher Education, over the same time period, to re-direct such funding disproportionately from those private colleges and universities to the state owned schools of higher education.

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**Page 2**

Goodwin College is truly grateful to the Governor and the Connecticut General Assembly for its on-going support of Connecticut's private college students through the continued funding of the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program.

While we are quite aware of the State of Connecticut's fiscal challenges we urge the Appropriations Committee to sustain Roberta Willis Scholarship funding for private colleges as well as scrutinize the discretion of the Office of Higher Education in disbursing such funds.

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