

# Capitol Monitor

A Report on Activity at the State Capitol

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## CSU-AAUP Takes To Capitol On Opening Day:

Despite frigid temps, winds, snow, ice, and hazardous driving conditions, CSU-AAUP members ventured out to greet legislators for the opening day of the 2018 legislative session.

Clad in CSU-AAUP's signature red t-shirts and wielding signs that read #ThriveTogether and Invest in Public Higher Education, CSU-AAUP members and their students made their presence felt as they greeted lawmakers. Together, the group delivered a special syllabus designed by CSU faculty to guide legislators on creating policies and laws that will help our students and all of Connecticut #ThriveTogether.

The group engaged GOP gubernatorial candidate Tim Herbst in a discussion on free tuition for the state's public colleges and universities. Herbst, who is a former First Selectman of Trumbull and nominee for State Treasurer in 2014, is a graduate of Trinity College and the son of school teachers. He told the group that he is still paying off his law school loans so he understands what our students go through. Right. Nonetheless, Herbst said he did not support free tuition for public higher education. The group also made contact with Sen. Ted Kennedy, Democratic Gubernatorial Candidate Ned Lamont, Sen. Beth Bye, Rep. Gregg Haddad, and Sen. Cathy Osten, among others.

CSU-AAUP members were present on the first day of the session and they will be there until the last day, which is May 9, 2018. So get ready as CSU-AAUP gears up for a session filled with advocacy action in support of quality public higher education!



Above, CSU-AAUP members and SCSU student Justin Farmer stand with Rep. Robyn Porter. Faculty and students showed up at the capitol on the first day of the 2018 session to teach legislators about quality public higher education!

## Governor Addresses Legislature On Opening Day:

The General Assembly convened the 2018 legislative session on Feb. 7, starting a 12-week period that will see legislators proposing new public policy and considering adjustments to the biennium budget adopted in October 2017. Issues expected to dominate the session include ways to mitigate the effects of the federal Trump Tax Plan on Connecticut taxpayers, tolls and other methods to fund transportation infrastructure, state employee and teacher pension obligations, pay equity, paid family leave and many others. House and Senate Democratic leaders jointly announced a progressive policy agenda they intend to advance. The "[Democratic Values Agenda](#)" includes establishing paid family leave, raising the minimum wage to an unspecified "living wage," ensuring pay equity and implementing tuition-free community college. CSU-AAUP is pressing for the four CSUs to be included in this tuition-free plan and continues to monitor the Board of Regents scheme to consolidation the colleges.

In his [final State of the State Address](#) before a joint session of the General Assembly, Governor Malloy did not focus on the Connecticut's budget challenges. Instead, he delivered a unifying and rallying speech, calling on legislators to build on Connecticut's long tradition of fairness. He proposed a set of policy initiatives to create a fairer, more equitable and more just state that included raising the minimum wage, enacting a family paid medical leave law, ending gender-based pay inequity, addressing sexual harassment, expanding the paid sick leave law and making it easier for Connecticut residents to vote.

Much of the session is expected to be devoted to the state budget. The projected deficits stand at \$244.6 million for current FY17-18 and \$165 million for FY18-19. At the same time, revenue collections are running \$586 million ahead of earlier projections. The October 2017 budget included adoption of a volatility cap, which requires unanticipated receipts to be deposited directly into the Rainy Day Fund, which has now grown to almost \$890 million. The General Assembly could make adjustments to bring the budget back in balance or legislators could simply choose to appropriate a portion of the reserve to close the deficit. Governor Malloy unveiled his FY 2019 budget adjustment proposal two days before session convened. He urged legislators to take politically difficult steps to close existing modest deficits and mitigate larger shortfalls looming in the out years. He also proposed a mix of cuts and targeted revenue enhancements. For a summary of the Governor's budget proposal, click [here](#). \*

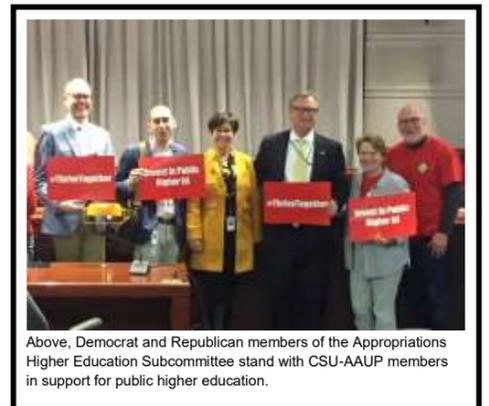
\* AFL-CIO Worker Bee

## CSU-AAUP Testifies At Approps

The place to be at the state legislature on Feb. 15 was the Appropriations Higher Education Subcommittee public hearing and CSU-AAUP members from all four CSU campuses and their students came out in force. The hearing began in the morning with testimony from CSCU President Mark Ojakian. You can watch his testimony [here](#). It begins at close to the 1:10 mark.

Public testimony was heard in the evening beginning at 7:30 p.m. CSU-AAUP Council attended the hearing and 18 of our members and four students testified in support of public higher education.

CSU-AAUP President Elena Tapia started off the testimony. President Tapia's testimony, as well as testimony from other CSU-AAUP members and their students, can be viewed [here](#) starting at the 2:48:28 mark. You can read their testimony [here](#). At the end of the hearing, some members of the committee posed for a photo with CSU-AAUP and students and held up signs that read #ThriveTogether and Invest In Public Higher ED.



Above, Democrat and Republican members of the Appropriations Higher Education Subcommittee stand with CSU-AAUP members in support of public higher education.

We'll watch to see they keep their focus!

## Labor Weighs In On Fiscal Stability:

A little secret buried in the back of the budget passed in October 2017 is the [Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth](#). This task force is top heavy with right-wing business executive appointees, including the CEO of Webster Bank and insurance heavy weight Bob Patricelli. Their task is to make recommendations regarding state revenues, tax structures, spending, debt, and improving the attractiveness of the state for business.

[Media reports](#) revealed recently that funding for the commissions research came from various organizations with ties to commission members. So much for unbiased research.

Labor leaders finally had an opportunity to [present to the commission on February 9](#). Together, SEBAC Chief Negotiator Danny Livingston, AFL-CIO President Lori Pelletier, CEA Executive Directors Don Williams, and AFSCME Executive Director Sal Luciano presented to the committee. The hearing, which lasted more than four hours, saw Labor leaders present real strategies to generate economic growth like raising the minimum wage, mandating gender-based pay equity, fining employers who underpay employees and help them enroll in taxpayer-funded Medicaid and SNAP programs and asking corporations to pay their fair share in taxes. To watch Labor leaders', deliver their presentation to the commission, [click here](#). The Commission has until March 1 to make recommendations to the General Assembly.

## Higher Ed Is Set To Hear Consolidation Bill:

A bill legislating community college consolidation is being heard at the next meeting of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 27, at 1 p.m. in room 1E of the Legislative Office Building. The committee also will hear a bill to increase student membership on the Board of Regents.

If you are interested in testifying on any of these bills, notify [Liz Newberg](#) no later than 4 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 26. All testimony is made public and should be emailed in a word or pdf format to [HEDtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:HEDtestimony@cga.ct.gov).

Here are links to the bills being discussed at Higher Education Committee's Feb. 27 public hearing:

[\\*H.B. No. 5037 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE DIVISION OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.](#)

[\\*S.B. No. 214 \(RAISED\) AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONSOLIDATION.](#)

[\\*H.B. No. 5194 \(RAISED\) AN ACT CONCERNING APPROVAL OF NOMINATIONS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT AND THE BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.](#)

[\\*H.B. No. 5195 \(RAISED\) AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ON THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT.](#)