



**CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS**

**MEDIA ALERT**

**EBARGOED UNTIL:**  
2:30 p.m. March 1, 2018

**CONTACT:** Liz Newberg, CSU-AAUP  
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**Statement from Elena Tapia, President of Connecticut State University  
American Association of University Professors  
On Proposed Free 2 Start and Free 2 Finish Scholarship Program:**

“CSU-AAUP applauds efforts unveiled today by the state legislature’s Higher Education Committee Chairs Sen. Beth Bye and Rep. Gregg Haddad that would help make public higher education more affordable and accessible for residents of Connecticut. This bill, HB 5371 An Act Establishing The Free 2 Start Scholarship Program And The Free 2 Finish Scholarship Program, is a step in the right direction to creating a public higher education system that is accessible to all residents of Connecticut.

“If legislators fail to invest in public higher education, Connecticut risks being left behind. Just look to neighboring states that are creating debt-free paths to achieving higher education degrees.

“CSU-AAUP, long champions of quality, affordable and accessible public higher education, is encouraged to see these legislators show the political courage to introduce a bill that can have such an enormously positive effect on so many lives.

“As this bill makes its way through the legislature, CSU-AAUP will be watching to make sure it does indeed create a true path to free public higher education for all Connecticut residents. If lawmakers can do that, they will be developing a Connecticut where all residents will not merely survive but, instead, will thrive together. And that is truly forward-thinking.”

- Elena Tapia  
CSU-AAUP President

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*CSU-AAUP represents more than 3,000 faculty, coaches, trainers, counselors, and librarians at the four Connecticut State Universities. CSU-AAUP believes quality public higher education should be made affordable and accessible to all individuals who want to pursue a degree at an institution of higher learning. We see higher education as an essential roadway to developing students’ abilities to think critically and become more engaged citizens of their communities. Through mentorships and guidance from their professors, students gain exposure to all forms of viewpoints, opinions, and interpretations. These work to move the needle toward acceptance and understanding, which in turn creates well-informed, thoughtful leaders of the future.*