

December 8, 2009

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in opposition of the Suspension of the State Technical High School's LPN Programs

My name is Connie Gibeault RN from Brooklyn CT. I am Department Head at Windham Technical School's LPN Program. It was a shock to find our program part of the Governor's mitigation Plan for the following reasons:

We are a program that has a 100%hire rate without job placement

There is a nursing shortage that is predicted to get worse

Our programs have several thousands of dollars of equipment much of that cannot be given to anyone else in our system i.e. Health Tech because our equipment is too advanced.

Two colleagues and I had the opportunity to see Governor Rell on Wednesday December 2nd and stated our concerns. After listening to us, she agreed she has tough cuts to make and that we can't just ask her not to cut our program, we have to offer a solution. We asked if raising our tuition was considered. She stated if raising our tuition would help reduce the cost of the program to the state we "may be able to save your program".

It is with those words that we ask you to consider an increase in our tuition.

I have heard from several of the applicants to my program with a variety of emotions. These individuals have already taken the pre-entrance test, taken or are presently taking the necessary pre-requisites and begun to change their lives in preparation to attend our program. Approximately 1/3 of my applicants have WIA funding (Workforce Investment Act).

The LPN is an entry level position in nursing. LPN's staff our nursing home and group homes caring for those individuals who cannot speak and/or care for themselves.(I am a guardian for an individual with Developmental Disabilities that requires that level of care.)

I am concerned for my current students. They will enter the workforce and may have to wonder who and when their LPN coverage for the next shift will arrive. They may be forced to work mandatory overtime to cover these openings, because they cannot abandon their patients. Who will replace the 'baby-boomer' nurse when she retires?

The impact of suspending our program will have a negative effect on citizens of Connecticut. The impact will be seen in our nursing homes, group homes, training schools, home care agencies and Physician offices.

Thank you

