

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

February 28, 2014

Susan Herbst  
President  
University of Connecticut  
352 Mansfield Rd, Unit 1048  
Storrs, CT 06269-1048

Dear President Herbst,

It is our understanding that graduate student employees are seeking to establish bargaining rights through the state's Board of Labor Relations. We support a free and fair process through which these employees can make the choice of whether to be represented by a bargaining unit, free of interference, like the over 8,000 UConn employees who have been afforded such an opportunity. We commend you for remaining neutral in this process and allowing the graduate employees to make their own decision.

The strength and quality of academic instruction and research is vital to maintaining and advancing UConn's success. Strengthening professional conditions and legal rights for your teaching and research assistants will bolster their resolve to excel in their positions. This, in turn, will ultimately accrue to the benefit of the institution.

As you know, the duties of your graduate employees are integral to the operations of UConn as they have built valuable relationships with faculty, students, and the university community. The quality, affordable and accessible education provided by teaching assistants has and will continue to benefit the university and its thousands of undergraduates by giving students the comprehensive education they deserve in a highly-competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century job market. Meanwhile, research assistants perform front-line work on innovative research projects, bringing in more than \$150 million annually to UConn in grants and contracts. This revenue fuels the university's growing reputation as a leader in research, while also stimulating our state's economy.

At nearly 60 college campuses across the country, graduate teaching and research assistants are unionized, including at nearby schools such as UMass Amherst, UMass Boston, UMass Lowell, NYU, SUNY, and URI. Recently, NYU graduate employees undertook an ultimately successful effort to unionize, during which the administration entered into a neutrality agreement with the union, setting a positive and respectful tone for the start of contract negotiations.

It is our hope that a similar approach will bring UConn greater and continued success.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



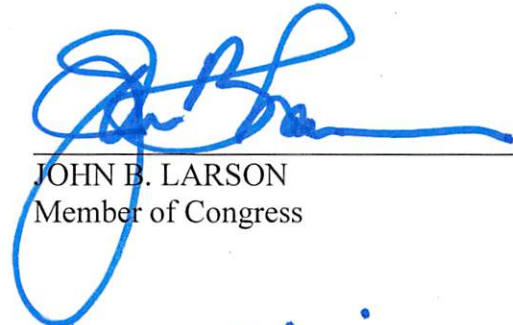
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senate



ROSA L. DELAURO  
Member of Congress



JOHN B. LARSON  
Member of Congress



JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress



JIM HIMES  
Member of Congress



ELIZABETH H. ESTY  
Member of Congress

Cc: Dannel P. Malloy, Governor  
Larry McHugh, Chair, Board of Trustees