



**STATE SENATE CANDIDATE STEVE CHOI:  
“REFUND FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER”**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*TRUMBULL 09/28/2020 – Steve Choi, the Republican candidate for State Senate in District 22, which includes the municipalities of Trumbull, Bridgeport, and Monroe, issued the following statement regarding rights for students and parents who pay tuition to public universities in Connecticut:*

Typically, March and April are anxious months for high school seniors as they await notice of acceptance, rejection, or waitlisting from colleges and universities. After admission letters arrive, students select their preferred university and go through the process of funding their education via student loans, financial aid, choosing on or off campus housing, a meal plan, and all the other necessities that come with college life. What the students do not receive from the college or university is a contract outlining exactly what the university will provide the student upon acceptance.

Nearly all private enterprise require a contract for service. When you purchase or rent a house or apartment, buy or lease a car, enter employment with a company, a contract is usually signed by both parties. But surprisingly, students of higher education are not empowered with such a guarantee. For all the students who lost a semester of education at their universities, where was the contract that ensured a refund from the universities that defaulted in providing services?

By some estimates, college tuition is roughly triple the rate of inflation. Some of the drivers of this unsustainable college tuition rate are construction of more campus buildings, administrative bloat, compensation for school presidents, athletic directors and coaches, college sports programs, student loan origination, and less funding from state government. There is no incentive for universities to stop raising tuition rates and to end the cycle of outrageous price gouging of students. Universities need to face the prospect that income is not guaranteed. If universities were compelled to provide a refund of tuition money for failure to deliver services, and abide by a contract, perhaps this would be the first step toward a rational budget model for higher education. This may be a better start than amending existing state and federal non-profit laws that allow tax except status of universities.

Connecticut has begun the process to merge 12 community colleges into a single accredited university with satellite campuses. This measure eliminates overhead costs such as numerous university presidents and administrators and advances the goal of affordable college education. Students and parents funding universities need to be recognized and protected. Lawmakers need to address this inequity. Students and parents did not expect to pay \$25k and then lose in-class instruction, housing, meal cards, and the college experience. Coupled with the fact that many parents lost their employment and source of income to pay for their child’s education, the very least a university should have done was to provide a prorated reimbursement for the failure to uphold their end of the bargain.

Our lawmakers are busy this week fixing their mistake in the Millstone electricity bill that caused our rates to skyrocket this summer and discussing rebates for spoiled food from United Illuminating and Eversource. Perhaps they should also consider a rebate to students and parents who had their educational instruction spoiled this past spring.

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