

American Association of University Professors
University of Connecticut Health Center Chapter

Testimony of
Ibrahim Elali M.D., FACP, Assistant Professor of Medicine
President Of UCHC-AAUP
Before the
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
2.22.22

My name is Ibrahim Elali. I'm an assistant professor of medicine, a Nephrologist, teaching and practicing at UConn Health. I'm also the President of UCHC-AAUP, the union representing over 600 physicians, dentists, and researchers who are faculty members at the UConn School of Medicine, School of Dental Medicine, and research scientists at UConn Health.

I would like to thank you for the chance to speak to you today and for your past support for UConn Health.

I am testifying today to highlight the high fringe rates caused by unfunded state pension plans. These rates have placed an undue stress on UConn Health research operation. Researchers come to Connecticut from all over the world to work on projects at UCH. This research helps create vital academic opportunities and beneficial economic impacts for the state. One example of UConn Health's impact, is the securing of the largest grant in UConn's history from one of our faculty member last year, totaling \$40 million, despite the States' high fringe rates in this very competitive field of science.

As you may remember years back, the state invested in UCH to create a Bioscience hub. The new and renovated research labs and clinical spaces are retaining and attracting physicians, researchers, and students to the state, ultimately bringing so much to our state on many levels.

However, the costs of unfunded pension liabilities in the form of high fringe rates, limits research efforts through the loss of faculty and researchers. In most cases our fringe rate costs are 30% higher than our peer institutions. The absorption of high fringe costs by UCH causes potential members of our community to turn elsewhere for opportunities. Without solving this obstacle, it will ultimately restrict further research growth, preventing us from hiring more faculty researchers and causing us to subcontract the work out to other state entities, therefore reducing our research development competitiveness.

We are asking that the Appropriations Committee support our request for the 100% coverage of the state legacy costs (retiree unfunded pension and retiree health) which would allow UConn Health to remain competitive in the research field, while keeping very highly thought after scientific talents in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Ibrahim Elali MD
President, UCHC-AAUP