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President Maric,

We are writing to you first and foremost out of respect for the University of Connecticut, an important Connecticut institution and top-tier university responsible for educating thousands of future leaders each and every year. From its nationally renowned academics to its leading athletic program, so much of what UConn does year in and year out, makes us proud as residents of the Constitution State.

Normally, as supporters from the West Hartford area and around the country, we are proud to watch UConn do what it does best: educate its students. For so many, UConn is an opportunity for a better future and a pathway to a great career. It's a chance to explore new ideas and engage with perspectives they wouldn't otherwise be exposed to. Like many universities, UConn provides its students with a means to expand their horizons, growing intellectually and educationally.

However, a flyer sent to many West Hartford residents advertising a symposium held by UConn's Public Interest Law Journal questioning whether "Parental Rights Always in the Best Interest of Children" raised some concerns. The event description says the symposium will "explore the complex issues surrounding the role of parental rights in advancing progressive goals while at the same time examin[ing] how parental rights are being used to undermine racial, gender, and LGBTQ equality." The speakers appear to consist of individuals intent on finding ways to separate parents from their children, and looking for excuses to use government power to do so.

Perhaps the largest issue of concern for a communication from a publicly-funded institution to the public at large, the law journal is not shy about pushing a progressive message into the homes of taxpayers of any and all political backgrounds.

On a university campus, it is normal for the most radical of ideas to be presented. We understand that even bad ideas need to be given the light of day in order for it to be analyzed and critiqued. Sunlight is the best disinfectant as they say. And nothing should interfere with the continued exploration of any and all ideas, good and bad, on UConn's campus or within the law school.

Many students use their four years to work passionately on political causes that matter to them. And that should continue unabated.

As concerned parents, citizens, and taxpayers, we worry that the only perspectives that are being represented on UConn's campus are those — as the symposium description describes it

— “advancing progressive goals.” Having a taxpayer-funded organization like UConn send mail to regular citizens, well outside of the UConn community, pushing such a message of family separation rightly alarmed those who received them. In addition, the symposium’s clearly stated political mission raised questions about why taxpayer funded organizations are using those funds to promote a specifically partisan political message to the public at large.

As concerned tax paying citizens, we would like to know what the University of Connecticut is doing to promote intellectual diversity on campus such that perspectives promoting family separation are not the only ones represented. Additionally, we would like an explanation of UConn policies around using university funding to contact the public at large and how such policies allow for tax payer funding to be used for political messaging to the general public.

To reiterate, though the individuals and organizations below may or may not disagree with the perspectives of the symposium, we believe it should go on as scheduled. Our concerns focus on the communication with the general public, and UConn’s efforts to ensure a diversity of views are represented on campus, especially when the tax payer dollars of Connecticut residents of all political persuasions are involved.

Thank you,

The undersigned - over 250 signers from across the country, including over 100 from CT

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