

A Public Comment submitted to Metro Hartford Future Implementation Committee Meeting

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I attended the Metro Hartford Future – Implementation Committee meeting on May 28, 2020. I mentioned² about the ‘Innovation Places Hartford/East Hartford (dba Launch Hartford)’ program which is part of the Metro Hartford CEDS Strategy Plan. As I stated - this program represents the third failure to build an innovation ecosystem in the region. I stressed the importance of having new governance models to remedy the repeated institutional failures. Upon the failure of the afore-mentioned program (managed by UConn CCEI), I had lodged complaints with Federal agencies against UConn. The program wrongfully diverted about 70% (est \$4.4m) of the public funding to benefit dozens of foreign small companies (that all left town before the Covid19 virus arrived). In my complaint to the Federal agencies, I stated the need for restitution of est \$4.4m by UConn because Hartford area small businesses were deprived of the opportunities and entitlements that were given to the foreign businesses instead. I also stated the need for a formal ruling on how UConn functions in terms of their roles and obligations. This needs to be distinctly delineated and a Federal ruling to clarify its compliance. UConn is active in several programs in the state - economic development (in this case), social services, healthcare, and education & educational infrastructure: it is of paramount importance that UConn is cognizant of the boundaries and obligations. Similarly, other higher education institutions like Trinity College, Univ. of Hartford, Goodwin College et al, are also bound by Federal statutes of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, and other statutes including those governing foreign business migration.

The complaint has since moved from the US Dept of Education – Office of Civil Rights to the US Dept of Justice. On Jan 7, 2021, I had requested the Office of the UConn President that UConn recuse itself from the program till the entire matter is adjudicated but I did not hear back from them. After 3 weeks, I did update the US Dept of Justice of the request made.

I would like stress once again, the importance of better governance of public-funded programs and with inclusion, transparency, and compliance.

Thank you.

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² Metro Hartford Future – Implementation Committee DRAFT Minutes (5/28/2020)

<https://crcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Implementation-Committee-Minutes-2020-05-28.pdf>