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*Testimony of
Mark Waxenberg, Director of Government Relations
Connecticut Education Association
Before the Education Committee*

Regarding

***Bill No. 1114 An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget
Recommendations Regarding Education, S.B. No. 1281 An Act
Concerning Pension Portability for School Superintendents and
Additional Retirement Credit for School Administrators, S.B. 1287
An Act Concerning Visiting International Teacher Permits***

February 28, 2007

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann, my name is Mark Waxenberg and I am the Director of Government Relations for the Connecticut Education Association. I am here this afternoon to comment on S.B. No. 1281 "An Act Concerning Pension Portability for School Superintendents and Additional Retirement Credit for School Administrators, S.B. No. 1287 "An Act Concerning Visiting International Teacher Permits" and section 26 of Bill No. 1114 "An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Regarding Education.

S.B. No. 1281 deals with additional time being purchased or granted to principals and/or superintendents. Despite the significant flaws outlined in the bill I must comment on the fact that enacting this legislation would place a future burden on the state teachers' pension system. A system that already has a \$6.9 billion unfunded liability and a system that we are trying to fix this session. Enhancing pension benefits in a pension system that is severely underfunded is not good policy and should be defeated.

S.B. No. 1287 deals with visiting international teachers and those teachers gaining permits to teach in Connecticut. We support such teachers being included in obtaining Durational Shortage Area Permits. We supported Teach For America students getting DSAP's last year and the legislation before you makes good sense. We would not support a "special" permit for international teachers because that could be a disadvantage to those teachers (i.e., health benefits etc.). It is important that visiting international teachers have the protection of a Collective Bargaining agreement so that they not be exploited or in jeopardy of unfair working conditions.

Lastly, a brief comment on Section 26 of Bill 1114. This section intrudes on the Collective Bargaining statutes that exist between teachers and Boards of Education in Connecticut and really does not "fit" in a budget bill. We have had many studies on teacher Collective Bargaining and spent many hours discussing these issues for teachers and municipal employees. Therefore, we oppose any legislation that would modify or alter existing state statutes that deals with Collective Bargaining between teachers and Boards of Education.

Thank you