



Connecticut **Business & Industry** Association

**Testimony of  
Lauren Weisberg Kaufman  
Vice President  
Connecticut Business and Industry Association  
Before the  
Education Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, Connecticut  
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My name is Lauren Weisberg Kaufman and I am a Vice President with the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA) and Executive Director of the CBIA Education Foundation. CBIA represents approximately 10,000 companies across the state of Connecticut, ranging from large corporations to small businesses in virtually every industry.

I am here today to support **Raised Bill No. 7047, An Act Concerning School District Accountability**. The purpose of this bill, as we understand it, is to insure that students who reside in districts with schools that are not meeting their educational needs, will have their needs addressed in a timely, expeditious fashion, thereby preventing them from falling further and further behind in their educational attainment.

As the state's largest business association, CBIA's members, large and small, require a highly educated and highly skilled workforce. We depend upon the state's schools to develop students who are prepared for post-secondary education and employment. However, as we all know, far too many students in our urban areas are woefully under-achieving and unprepared for the world they will enter as adults. This legislation will allow the State Department of Education to work more rapidly and effectively with school districts in need of improvement and help them address the needs of their at-risk students.

While mindful of issues of local control and local bargaining agreements, it is the state's responsibility to ensure that all students in Connecticut have access to high quality educational experiences that will prepare them for the academic rigors of post-secondary education and provide them with personal options and career choices. We have been failing the majority of these students for too long. In addition to the personal loss of a meaningful future, the employers of the state simply cannot function and grow the economy without a skilled workforce. We are all vitally vested in education. That is why CBIA supports the accountability measures that are proposed in this legislation and will look closely at others that may come before you. We must ensure now that underperforming schools are assisted and/or reconstituted if necessary and that the students in them have access to the high quality educational experiences they deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment today.