



Advocating for teachers  
and public education

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***Testimony of  
Joanna Brother, Teacher  
New London Public Schools  
Before the Education Committee***

***Bill No. 1114 An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget  
Recommendations Regarding Education***

***February 28, 2007***

Good afternoon. My name is Joanna Brother. It has been my privilege to be a bilingual elementary and middle school teacher in the New London public schools over the past nine years. I feel privileged because I am proud to be a teacher in New London, a typically small urban center of about 6 square miles, 55 to 60% of which is tax exempt property. As a result, we are a financially beleaguered small urban with a large population of second language learners.

The lack of financial support last year alone resulted in the closing down of an elementary school – because the city had no money. The result of this closing had a ripple effect on the elementary system: class sizes hover around 28 at the remaining four elementary schools; teaching positions, particularly in critical student support areas, were reduced or eliminated altogether; class sizes were further increased; grant funded programs continue to come and go, which hurt continuity of instruction; pre-kindergarten, unified arts, and gifted and talented programs are constantly on the chopping block, year after year. While wealthy districts add 21<sup>st</sup> century programs to meet their students' needs, our schools continue to suffer from budget cuts which keep us from ever getting ahead.

These are just a few examples of the burden our students continually bear and why I am here to ask you to please support an increase in ECS funding that is once and for all sustainable and viable – one that schools like ours can count on year to year.

Like the story of the Little Dutch Boy trying to plug the holes in a leaking dam – there are just so many holes, we can no longer continue to plug them before the education dam collapses and our children get swept away.

Thank you.