

LOCAL 511

Public Hearing Testimony Speaker: Ron McLellan

Date: 3/12/07 Bill Number: 7357

Secretary-Treasurer

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Testimony of
**Ron McLellan, speaking on behalf of Steven Perruccio, President
Municipal Employees Union Independent (MEUI), SEIU Local 506**

Education Committee
Public Hearing – Monday, March 12, 2006, 12:30 PM

Raised Bill 7357 An Act Concerning Paraeducators

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. My name is Ron McLellan and I am speaking on behalf of Steven Perruccio who could not be here today. Steven is the President of the Municipal Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 506, which represents more than three hundred educational paraeducators in eleven school districts across the state of Connecticut.

MEUI was pleased to participate in the Program Review and Investigations Committee's study of school instructional paraprofessionals last Fall and I want to thank you for holding this hearing today and for giving me an opportunity to speak in support of raised bill 7357.

The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 generated tremendous interest in the standards for employment and training of instructional paraeducators. The Act required paraeducators working in school districts that receive Title I funding to meet minimum requirements. Currently, there are no standard hiring requirements for paraeducators working in school districts that do not receive Title I funding.

With education budgets tighter than ever before, the role of paraeducators has become more valued, as they provide additional opportunities for one-on-one instruction. We rely on them not only to give supplemental instruction in reading, writing and mathematics, but to also provide assistance to students with special education needs. These men and women provide critical, support for our students' academic success. They are highly skilled and experienced specialists who deserve the recognition, respect and uniformity that a statewide credential would provide. Raised bill 7357 would set uniform criteria for basic skills for all paraeducators in Connecticut, regardless of where they work.

While uniform requirements are a step in the right direction, we must also give paraeducators access to appropriate professional development that allows them to become acquainted with new research, learn new techniques and share best practices. We must also educate teachers about the effective use of



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instructional paraeducators so that they can work together in the most effective way possible. By requiring paraeducators and teachers to discuss their respective roles in the classroom, paraeducators are more likely to be properly trained and appropriately utilized. Our students benefit from that level of cooperation and understanding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.