



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

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Testimony
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Education Committee

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SB 611 AN ACT CONCERNING RECYCLING PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

SB 613 AN ACT CONCERNING UNIFORM START DATE FOR SCHOOLS

HB 5821 AN ACT CONCERNING DISTANCE LEARNING

HB 5871 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BEST PROGRAM

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) opposes **SB 611, An Act Concerning Recycling Programs in Schools**. Requiring recycling programs at schools is a mandate. Many schools are already doing some form of recycling. Instead of mandating, CABE would like to see successful programs showcased for elementary, middle and high schools.

CABE opposes **SB 613, An Act Concerning a Uniform Start Date for Schools**, any efforts to establish a uniform school calendar, including a requirement that the school year start after Labor Day. Examination of the calendars of Connecticut public schools reveals that the length of the student school year varies between 180-185 days in traditional public schools, with some charter and magnet schools having student school years as long as 199 days. In addition, observance of religious holidays, professional development requirements, use of school facilities on Election Day, snow days, and school construction schedules necessitate local flexibility in determining the appropriate school calendar for each district.

In reviewing **HB 5821, An Act Concerning Distance Learning**, CABE opposes the requirement on each school district to participate as part of the consortium. While technology has advanced to allow a Russian teacher to work with two schools, there are other schools that have limited resources to keep up with the advances or are choosing to use their resources on other technologies, such as smart boards and even getting computers directly in the hands of every student. In terms of infrastructure, the bandwidth has been provided to the districts, but the cost and implementation to each school is still too much of a burden on many districts.

CABE opposes **HB 5871, An Act Concerning the Best Program**, to require school boards and unions to bargain over the compensation, hours and duties of teachers who train and evaluate student teachers or serve as mentors and assessors of beginning teachers. This program is a state program and the state's resources should be fully utilized to run this program to train and retain beginning teachers. In recent testimony, the Commissioner advocated letting him review the program before a legislative solution is passed. CABE supports this plan. We do not support suspending the program.

We appreciate your attention to these issues.