



**RAISED BILL NO. 5594 - CORP & INC. TAX CREDIT FOR ED. FOUNDATIONS**  
**The Norwalk Education Foundation, Norwalk, CT**

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- Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee
- My name is Lauren Rosato, and I am the Executive Director of The Norwalk Education Foundation, the education foundation of the Norwalk Public Schools. Thank you for the opportunity to address the assembly today.
- Our education foundation exists to effect positive change in public education in Norwalk by improving teacher quality with technology training and funding for innovative classroom instruction, and by offering a variety of high quality, learning opportunities for children after school, in partnership with many community agencies.
- **We are *strongly* in favor of Bill 5594 as this bill will assist education foundations in achieving our goals. Giving our corporate and individual donors the additional benefit of a tax credit for their donation will help us increase our needed contributions.**
- Education Foundations or "Local Education Funds" as we are collectively called, play a central role in building and sustaining broad support for quality public education.
- Local education funds originally started around 1982 in California following Proposition 13, then in 1983, the Ford Foundation help start 5 more along with the Public Education Network, to improve public education for low income and minority children in urban areas.
- We, the Norwalk Education Foundation, were started in 1998 as a non-profit organization that works with, but remains independent of our local school system for the improvement of public education in Norwalk.
- We have always been independent of our school board: we are not tax-payer funded; we raise our own funding which allows us the unique ability to be a "critical" friend to our school district.
- Norwalk has approx. 11,000 public school students of which an estimated 34% are at, or below poverty, and 57% are minority.
- As an education foundation, we have the ability to voice strong opinions about our education challenges, to source education improvements, to conduct research, to build relationships within and outside the Norwalk district, to think out-of-the box about education solutions, to share best practices with other education foundations across the country, to propose ideas to our district, and to work with them to solve our public education challenges.
- I estimate that there are thousands of education foundations nationwide, and I know that this number is growing both nationally and internationally.
- There are also many associations and networks of education foundations throughout the country like the CTCEF, who help us work together to achieve our goals.
- Since we were created and we exist to improve public education, I must voice concern however, about Section 1, Paragraph E of the Bill, which defines an education foundation as an organization established "to provide tuition assistance for children from low income families to attend *non-public schools*."
- Non-public schools are not part of our mission, so I respectfully ask that the committee amend this language to align with the mission of what true public education foundations were founded for after Proposition 13 and by Ford: namely for the improvement of *public education*.
- On behalf of the Board of Directors of The Norwalk Education Foundation and myself, we thank the Committee for considering this important legislation, and are extremely pleased that Bill 5594 has been raised, and that education foundations are finally being recognized for the important role they play in shaping the changing landscape of our public education system. Thank you for helping to strengthen our public education system. If you have any questions me.

Public Hearing Testimony Speaker: *Lauren Rosato*

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Date: *2/29/08* Bill Number: *5594*