



**Written Testimony by
David G. Carter, Chancellor
Connecticut State University System**

**Before the Committee on Education
Monday, March 10, 2008**

Due to previous commitments, I am unable to appear before you today, but I wanted to submit comments for your consideration on House Bill 5871, *An Act Concerning the BEST Program*. As the Chancellor of the Connecticut State University System, I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Connecticut State University System representing Central Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University and Western Connecticut State University.

First, let me commend the proponents of House Bill 5871, because, like the related bills (Senate Bill 329 and Senate Bill 330) on which Southern Connecticut State University testified on February 27, 2008, its intention is to improve the BEST Program and the support it lends to new teachers. As the Connecticut State University System, we are proud to have graduated the most teachers over the past five years and many have participated in the Program.

I call your attention to Section 3 that establishes a task force to develop a plan to replace the beginning educator support and training program with a mentor assistance program. I respectfully request that, given our role in preparing teachers and involvement in the BEST Program, that a representative from CSUS be included as a member.

In addition, I would suggest that in developing the plan and considering (in Section (a)(4)) "methods to encourage collaboration from the Department of Education, Regional Educational Service Centers and local and regional school districts to identify, recruit and retain mentors," that there also be consideration for involvement by institutions of higher education.

Finally, I would also ask that when the Task Force considers ways to strengthen the BEST Program, the impact on student teacher supervision must be considered. For example, there are some potentially unintended consequences of thinking of the BEST Program only in terms of the needs of beginning teachers. Plans that call for disproportional incentives to support BEST mentors working with first year teachers and do not include cooperating teachers who work with student teachers will result in attracting teachers away from student teacher supervision to working with first year teachers. This may create a problem with the placement of student teachers and, thus cause a bottleneck in the system of teacher preparation.

Please feel free to contact Jill E. Ferraiolo, Associate Vice Chancellor for Government Relations/Communications, should you like any additional information or have any questions regarding this matter.