

Public Hearing Testimony

Speaker:

Liz  
Stokes

February 29, 2008

Date: 2/29/08 Bill Number: 5594

To: Members of the Education Committee

From: Liz Stokes, President

Connecticut Consortium of Education Foundations

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Re: Raised Bill No. 5594—Tax Credit for Donations to Education Foundations

The Connecticut Consortium of Education Foundations facilitates the creation, growth, and effectiveness of local education foundations in CT. CTCEF, a statewide, 501(c)(3), non-profit organization, encourages sharing and collaborating between education foundations and with other community-based organizations. It is founded on the proven principle that community involvement is a key factor in improving schools and that local education foundations can focus these resources to support public education.

The number of local education foundations, or funds as some of them are called, in CT (and throughout the country) continues to grow. In CT, the number has grown from 30 in late 1999 to 78 today in communities of all sizes. CTCEF board members have helped many of these education foundations during their start-up phase and beyond.

Each education foundation is independent and responds to needs in its community. Almost all award teacher mini-grants. Some tackle larger projects—an ecology center, a planetarium, media or video labs, writing centers. Some manage and fund ongoing programs—mentoring, after-school, technology-training for teachers. Some include community members in their mission statements and offer community education programs.

I have sent Raised Bill No. 5594 to our e-mail lists of CTCEF Board Members, Affiliates, and Friends. We are delighted that the Education Committee appreciates how important education foundations are to our public schools and our communities. Based on the responses I received, I am strongly supporting this bill with one very important concern.

In Section 1, subsection (e), you include in your definition of an education foundation a part that says, “or provide tuition assistance for children from low income families...to attend nonpublic schools.” I have been constantly in touch with education foundations in CT and all over the country since 1993. I do not know of any education foundation that has provided or would consider providing tuition assistance for children to attend nonpublic schools. Education foundations support public schools not private schools.

If you can remove that one part of the proposed bill (less than three lines) and the revised bill becomes an actual bill, you will encourage more businesses and individuals to donate to education foundations. The additional donations could truly make a difference in our public schools by providing equipment, programs, and professional development that are outside the school budget’s responsibility; by improving teacher morale; by building community support for education; and by helping CT schools become the best they can be.