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**TESTIMONY**  
**Sharon M. Palmer**  
**Education Committee**  
**March 16, 2009**

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and members of the committee I am Sharon Palmer, President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse 28,000 member AFL-CIO union.

I am here to speak regarding several bills but primarily those on teacher certification.

Bill 939 gives too much decision making power to the State Department of Education. The number of hours of continuing education, competency area training, and teacher course work on children with diverse learning needs are all undefined and left for a decision by the State Department of Education. We believe this is not a good balance between the Legislative and Executive branches. We also believe there should be a thorough discussion of quality vs. quantity.

The bill also eliminates the right of review if an applicant is denied certification. Since the denial includes language which says "other due and sufficient cause" we find this troubling. There is also no appeal for revocation of a teaching certificate. Mistakes happen; appeal should be available.

Bill 6666 - There isn't much in this bill we support:

- Allowing certification for those who simply pass a test is an insult to the profession.
- The use of the term "adjunct" is a red flag for us. I'm sure there are some very talented artists who would like to work in schools. They should be employed as any other part time teacher. We see our colleagues in higher education struggling to make a living as adjuncts and don't want that to begin in pre K-12 education.
- We don't understand the logic in requiring in-state teachers to take a competency exam and subject area assessment while exempting out-of-state teachers. Perhaps we should encourage new Connecticut graduates to teach in Rhode Island, New York or Massachusetts and then apply in Connecticut. We also don't believe non-public teaching should be creditable.



Let me briefly mention our position regarding several other bills:

Bill 6653 - Support. These teachers should not be treated as second class teachers.

Bill 6654 - Oppose. This bill would allow someone to teach with only 12 hours of credit in their subject area. They would only have to be enrolled in an alternate route program. This is another bill attempting to lower standards.

Bill 6657 - Oppose. Not all districts have gifted and talented programs. Wealthier districts have extensive programs. Few urban districts can afford a program.

Thank you for your time and this hearing opportunity.