



**State of Connecticut**  
HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONN. 06106

State Representative DebraLee Hovey  
Education Committee  
Public Hearing Testimony  
Monday, February 23, 2009

Dear Senator Gaffey, Senator Caligiuri, Senator Fonfara, Representative Fleischmann, Representative Giuliano, Representative Reynolds, and Education Committee Membership:

I regret I cannot come before you personally to seek your support for HB 6492, An Act Authorizing Board Of Education Contingency Funds, but I would like to thank the committee for raising this bill. I believe that passage of this bill will enable local school boards to plan better without the threat of penalty from the state.

Under our current state statues local school boards must return any unspent state education funds. The belief is that if school boards have extra funds at the end of the fiscal year, then too much money was awarded. In an effort to keep all state funding, school boards cannot risk running a slight surplus. This leads to splurges on items schools may not need and does not allow for school boards to plan for unexpected events.

Recently, the Trumbull High School Marching Band was invited to perform in the Presidential Inauguration in Washington DC. This was unexpected and left the band scrambling to raises tens of thousands of dollars in a few short weeks. This event was certainly worthy of funding from the local school board, but without a contingency fund, the support available was limited.

As many of you are no doubt aware, one of the biggest expenses a school district incurs is funding Special Education. These students require special services, which are very costly. If a special needs child moves into a school district unexpectedly, school boards do not have reserve funds to draw on and must seek more aid from the state or make cuts elsewhere. If the state would allow school boards to amass a small surplus, they would be better prepared for unforeseen events.

Many towns are facing budget shortfalls and as such must make painful cuts. If the state had allowed school boards to run surplus in the good times, they may have been better positioned for these tough times. On behalf of local school boards and myself, I thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DebraLee Hovey".

DebraLee Hovey  
Assistant Minority Leader