

TESTIMONY
SHARON M. PALMER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
February 23, 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 union.

Today I will remark briefly on five bills before you.

Bill 945 – The addition of world language to graduation requirements is a worthy initiative. However, research has shown that introducing world language in the early grades is more effective. If choices must be made, we choose world language education in elementary school rather than high school.

Bill 947 – We are not opposed to on-line course work. We think the State Department of Education should first develop uniform standards. We believe it is premature to have districts adopting individual policies without standards in place.

Bill 6491 – AFT Connecticut strongly supports longitudinal studies of student achievement. Measuring the progress of individual students or groups of unique and identical students is the only

way to truly measure achievement. Rather than a yearly comparison of different students in a particular grade, a unique identifying number allows for monitoring the progress of an individual student. Connecticut has begun this project and we believe it is an important initiative which should be finished.

Bill 6495 – We oppose this bill. We believe the language is unnecessary for magnet schools. Charter schools are again trying to skirt the agreed-upon language and mission for their creation. Last year charter schools tried for language which would have multiple campuses count as one school. This year they want to expand the towns drawn from which is counter to their mission and purpose, but would allow for larger schools.

Bill 6496 – We strongly support the use of green cleaning products in schools and hope this bill moves forward.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to appear before you.