

**Connecticut General Assembly
Education Committee**

Testimony: [Sean Tomany]

Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you today regarding the creation of a resident teacher certification in Connecticut. My name is Sean Tomany and I am an educator in the city of Hartford. For the last nineteen months, I have been working with Teach for America corps members Emily Schienes and Megan Smith. I have acted as a mentor for them in their first years of teaching and for the completion of their Best Portfolio. I have been working in Hartford for the past eleven years and have come to love my students and my job. So that is the point of view that I am going to give you today. As I progressed through my career, I became more involved with the management of the school and one of the things that I noticed was that Hartford was having a difficult time recruiting and keeping quality teachers. As a result, I began working with student teachers because I believe that good teachers are a key component to closing the achievement gap. Then along came Teach for America (TFA).

Teach for America is another avenue for urban districts to get high quality new teachers. I first became acquainted with TFA when I shared a classroom with Emily Scheines, so I have seen firsthand what TFA does to help teachers accomplish success in a room. Emily is one of the hardest working people that I have ever met. She spends long hours preparing her lesson plans. Teach for America has been able to accomplish what I see as an important component to success. It has taken highly intelligent adults from some of the most prestigious colleges in America and placed them in the neediest schools. Then TFA does one of the most important things that a new teacher needs and that is to provide them with support and training in their first and second years.

Hartford needs dedicated and talented young teachers and Teach for America provides us with these kinds of teachers. It is extremely important that we get more people who are dedicated to the idea of working with our urban students and anything we can do to get these people, we should do. Passing this legislation will not hurt students or the profession; it will only provide the people who are dedicated to helping our students a chance to succeed.

Establishing a resident teacher certificate is important because it would allow TFA to train and support its teachers over the course of a year, in a way that is best suited to the needs of a beginning teacher. If TFA were forced to condense its efforts to the summer period, for example, I do not think it would be as successful in preparing and developing its teachers.

I believe that recognizing TFA as a clinical model and creating the resident teacher certificate for them to enter the classroom may actually pave the way for other alternative certification programs to provide similar ongoing training and support. Passage of this bill is, therefore, not only critical to TFA but also for a new vision for alternative certification programs in our state. I urge you to pass this bill. Thank you.