

**Friis, John**

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**From:** bskreb@sbcglobal.net  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2009 5:34 AM  
**To:** Friis, John  
**Subject:** Testimony

March 16, 2009  
Testimony  
H.B. 6666

Good Afternoon Senator Gaffney, Representative Fleishman and members of the Education Committee. My name is Barbara Skrebutenas and I am president of the Connecticut Music Educators Association. I am before you today to urge your opposition to H.B. 6666 Section 5 subsections (a) through (e).

Arts educators statewide have been experiencing a decline in funding and instructional time for the arts as districts struggle with the pressures of standardized testing and reallocate resources away from non tested subject areas. Approval of this bill will further diminish the opportunity for a well rounded and high quality education for Connecticut's children by allowing non certified artists to deliver instruction in place of properly trained and highly qualified teachers

Currently there is not a shortage of arts teachers in our state and there may even be a surplus due to recent staff reductions in some of our large urban districts through the implementation of school based management and redesign.

Subsection (e) states "no person holds holding an adjunct instructor certificate can displace any person holding a teaching certificate" but the language contained in this bill does open the door for districts to hire adjunct instructors in place of certified teachers when there are vacant positions available.

Arts educators sometimes invite performing artists from outside of their school to work with their students for short periods of time. This is valuable supplemental tool and should continue. However, the roles of the artist and the arts educator are very different and guest artists should never be used to supplant certified educators.

The dictionary definition of "artist" is "a person who does something skillfully or creatively" The visual or performing artist shows their mastery of their skill in our concert halls and galleries. The dictionary definition of "educator" is "an expert in the theories or administration of education" The educator is a master at communicating how to do a skill to others. Educators teach how to achieve excellence and understand the principles of child development, learning theory and psychology.

An arts educator is both of these. He/she has mastered an artistic skill and has also received the necessary training required of all teachers.

H.B. 6666 if approved will effectively knock 50% off the value of arts education for our students.

Artists dedicate their life to their art.

Arts educators dedicate their life to students. It is through their teaching of their art to children that help to develop the skills necessary for success in school, later at work and in life.

The language contained in Section 5 is but a sad reflection of an old saying  
"Those that know do and those that don't teach"  
In reality, what should be said is "Those who teach do more"

Thank you very much.

Barbara Skrebutenas  
President  
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