

Madam Chair/Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, thank you. My name is Eric Esposito, I am from Hamden Connecticut, and I am a student in the Education Center for the Arts in the theater department, in New Haven Connecticut. I will be addressing Raised Bill No. 6666, section 5, which I strongly support.

When I go into E.C.A. I know that I will be able to create art, to learn how to finesse my craft, but, most importantly, to express myself without any preconceptions or self-judgment in one of the safest environments I have ever had the pleasure of being involved in.

In my first year at E.C.A. I was in the "Bullying Project" where we (the freshman class) wrote and performed scenes dealing with the topic of bullying. If I was not in this project I probably would still be carrying the nightmare of constantly remembering my past bullying experiences with no source of escape. I was always extremely judgmental of myself, now I have learned that it is O.K. to open up, to express, to just enjoy life and never judge anything I see or hear too harshly. The magic and autonomy E.C.A. gives me will carry me through the rest of my life.

Lily Tomlin (as "Edith Ann") once said "I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework," well, that certainly is what all the teachers at E.C.A. have given me. It is my firm belief that the greatest teacher in

life is experience. The teachers at E.C.A. are working inside their field. They have experience in the real world with what they are teaching us. These teachers are the torchbearers, they pass along the knowledge and aptitude needed for us as the next generation of artists, and supporters of the arts. The teachers at E.C.A. possess a palpable ardor, a great fervor to teach us all how to be the best we can be.

There is a real sense of "working together" between the teachers and us students. The teachers at E.C.A. make it clear that they are learning just as much from us as we are learning from them. This makes it easier for us to better communicate our thoughts and ideas, and makes us more confident to share them.

I urge you all to think back to a teacher you had that made learning "exciting". Did that person have a certificate in teaching? Most of the people I have learned from in life possess no teaching certificates from Harvard or Yale; some have not even gone to college. The greatest teachers need simply the passion for what they teach their students and their generosity to pass it on. The teachers at E.C.A. altruistically help us learn while being open to learning themselves. All the teachers at E.C.A. are able to communicate their lessons lucidly through engaging projects and creative experimentation. The teachers at E.C.A. make learning captivating and resonant, certificate or no certificate.