

**Testimony in Support of HB 6666, Section 5
Adjunct Instructor Certificate**

Sen. Gaffey, Rep. Fleischman, and members of the Committee,

My name is George Johnson and I am the parent of one graduate and one current student in Theater the ECA High School Arts Magnet Program in New Haven. Both of our children have grown tremendously in the program and we do not want to see a wonderful, life-enhancing and life-saving program "broken" when it does not need to be. ECA is widely acknowledged as one of Connecticut's premier examples of the successful marriage of equal opportunity and excellence in education.

I am speaking to strongly advocate for Section 5 of House Bill H6666, which will allow for adjunct faculty certificates to be issued to the highly-trained professional artists, who in this case serve as ECA's part-time faculty. If they are required to become certified for 12-hour per week part-time positions, they will not be able to do so and the school will close. This will be a terrible loss to Connecticut's high school students in 19 school districts and will end ECA's 35-year record of preparing Connecticut's high school students for productive lives, with excellence, in their professions, their communities and the economy awaiting them.

Full certification for part-time instructors, on the face, seems natural and the right thing to do. However, because of the unique circumstances and demands of the "practice" of these "practicing professionals", the requirement would be onerous and, in effect, "pull the plug" on this school of equal opportunity and excellence. Certification activities and costs are prohibitive for these professionals already juggling multiple jobs and their professional practices.

Unfortunately, some opposition to Section 5, is stated by others that if this provision passes, students of all ages in our magnet schools may be taught by quote 'instructors who have no experience in child development, classroom instruction, or age appropriate programming for students.' I would like to point out this position does not acknowledge that the broader educational and development issues are already addressed by:

- a) the fact that in a part-time magnet school the adjunct faculty are under the close supervision and work side by side with fully certified teachers and department heads, and
- b) the fact that in a part-time magnet program, students remain fully involved with their regular high schools certified faculty and counseling staff, who do an excellent job with these students developmental needs.

I urge you to consider such objections against Section 5 in light of these practical considerations.

Our promise in America is not just "No Child Left Behind" in principle, but opportunity to build oneself and excel beyond a mandated minimum of education. Teaching excellence, certification and legitimate "No Child" concerns are founded on our concepts and definitions of what constitutes "good teaching". The ECA educators are almost all practicing professionals, accomplished in their fields, who may typically teach only a few to 12 hours per week, in their specific specialty and already under the guidance of an accredited department chair or full-time faculty. Their life experience, deep understanding of their field and, in many cases, college level teaching experience make them teachers of excellence of the kind we all seek.

The ECA part-time instructors are paid minimally, without benefits. They will tell you they are involved because of the unique and deep impact they can achieve teaching high school students how to excel in their arts and, in turn, excel in their broader education, life and career, whether in the arts or not. The educational, professional and personal growth of the students in this program is astounding and their experience, enthusiasm and knowledge in turn suffuse their regular high

school classes and activities, influencing students and the communities outside the magnet schools.

My hope, and the hope of many parents involved, is to preserve this acknowledged school of equal opportunity and excellence, and the benefits it brings to the twenty constituent communities, Connecticut and the nation. We hope that Section 5 will be included and passed and the Connecticut State Legislature will continue to support responsible and clearly successful avenues of getting practicing professionals into classrooms. There they can bring the wonderful and highly effective methods of mentoring, which includes how one acts in one's profession, how one adapts to changes and how one can continue to grow and educate oneself throughout their career and life. These are surely goals we share for our children.

With great respect to the Committee,

I thank you.

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