

## **Friis, John**

---

**From:** Kathryn Bessen-Johnson [losanum@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 15, 2009 11:12 AM  
**To:** Friis, John  
**Cc:** eca\_pace@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** HB6666, Section 5 - UPDATED

Please disregard my previous letter (March 14, 2009). - Kathryn Bessen-Johnson

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to strongly advocate for Section 5 of House Bill HB6666, which will allow for adjunct faculty certificates to be issued to the highly-trained professional artists, who serve as ECA's part-time faculty, to continue their 35-year record of preparing Connecticut's high school students for our competitive global economy. 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.

I attended ECA from 2003-2007. The education I received there has shaped my life and my plan to become a professional theater director.

I was never comfortable in the traditional school setting. I did well for the most part, but it wasn't until I started attending ECA that my education had a higher meaning than homework and report cards. The ECA teachers call themselves "artists teaching artists". Their goal is to mentor young artists as they explore their chosen crafts. As a result, the school has an environment of intense trust and respect among students and faculty. Students come to class eager to be challenged. "Take risks," the teachers say, "And support each others' bold choices." Within this environment, students immerse themselves in the topics of study, from rehearsing Stanislavski's classic acting method to interviewing other teenagers at the Yale Children's Hospital for a student-written play.

Today, I am a sophomore studying directing at DePaul University's Theatre School. I receive over half my tuition in merit and talent awards, and next year I plan to take Directing with the M.F.A. graduate students. I have worked with professional actors, directors, and playwrights, and was admitted to every college conservatory I applied to. I would not be here without my mentors at ECA.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Bessen-Johnson  
DePaul University  
B.F.A. Theatre Arts '11