

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischman, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Kiran Edelstein and I am a junior in the Theatre Department at Educational Center for the Arts (ECA) in New Haven. I come before you today to express my support for Section 5 of House Bill 6666, regarding the Adjunct Instructor Certificate.

I wanted to attend ECA and my parents encouraged me to do so because of the highly-qualified teachers there who teach students in their respective disciplines and who prepare us to live and work in a competitive global economy. Most of these teachers possess advanced degrees and have been recognized for their professional achievements with various awards and honors. They are gifted and experienced artists in acting, dance, music, visual arts, and creative writing. This is what is important to the students of ECA and their parents.

ECA teachers teach their students about the arts that they are currently involved in, they teach about the art that they love as much as we do, maybe even more. Our teachers teach us bravery to stand up and practice as artists in the real world. They teach us life experience. Most high school English teachers don't write novels, and most science teachers don't conduct research or work in labs, but I know that my acting teachers act, and I feel that I learn more from them about acting because of their profession. They are not just teachers to us, we see them as artists, and as mentors. We are not concerned with "certified" teachers but want to keep the highly-qualified teachers who work with us

Without the Adjunct Instructor Certificate, our teachers, who, on average work 12 hours per week at ECA and receive no fringe benefits, would be forced to leave and ECA would be forced to close. This would mean that students like me, who hope to graduate next year and in the following three years, will not be able to complete our studies, to which we have devoted many hours and much passion. It would also mean that hundreds of prospective students, like my younger sister, who hope to attend ECA will never have the opportunity to do so.

I urge you to support House Bill 6666, Section 5 to allow our teachers to keep teaching us and to keep the wonderful opportunities presented by ECA available to many more classes of talented high school students for years to come. Thank you for your time.