

To: the Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly
From: Richard Wells

Re: Opposition to House Bill No. 6666 - An Act Concerning Teacher Certification

As the retired Director of Music and Performing Arts for the Simsbury Public School with over 35 years of teaching in Connecticut schools, I am shocked and dismayed by House Bill No. 6666 An Act Concerning Teacher Certification.

The removal of certification requirements for arts educators is puzzling and leads one to believe that the Education Committee holds the Arts in an inferior position to all other subjects taught in our Connecticut schools:

- Why are the arts being singled out?
- If our state is willing to remove certification requirements for arts educators, why not for other subjects?
- Don't the arts require the same educational training for teachers that other subjects do?
- Isn't an understanding of state standards, child development, curriculum design, instructional practice and methodology, and assessment not applicable to arts education?
- Is there some motivation for the speedy passage of this bill?

As an Arts Administrator, I have worked with many artists in our schools. I have encouraged many musicians to enter the teaching profession by gaining certification through the Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) program. Practicing artists can provide excellent models for students. However, they lack a complete understanding of the state standards. Our students need to be able to create, perform and respond to music with understanding. Music is more than a pleasing performance. Students need to understand how to carryout these three artistic processes on their own. They can best learn this from teachers who know how to sequence learning over time and know how to assess their student's success. Through the ARC program, Connecticut artists currently have the ability to learn these skills. It is a route that is relatively brief given the amount of knowledge and skills that need to be learned. Instead of waving certification requirements, why not expand opportunities for teachers to gain certification through the ARC program?

I join many others in the education profession to urge the Education Committee to defeat this bill. We must not accept unqualified teachers in any subject area.

Richard Wells
254 Hill Rd.
Harwinton, CT 06791