

**Friis, John**

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**From:** Ryan Sartor [ryansartor@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 14, 2009 6:11 PM  
**To:** Friis, John  
**Cc:** eca\_pace@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Sec.5 of House Bill H6666

Dear Representative Fleischmann, Senator Gaffey, and members of the Education Committee,

I am writing to strongly advocate for **Sec.5 of House Bill H6666**, 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 10-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*.

My experience at ECA has been instrumental in every aspect of my success in life. Creating Writing Chair, Caroline Rosenstone, is the one teacher who has always been there for me. I am welcome at the school, and any email I send her asking for advice is promptly answered. I went to college at Long Island University - C.W. Post Campus, and took many creative writing classes - none of them held a CANDLE to the amazing teaching that goes on at ECA. I took screenwriting classes at college, none of those teachers were as great as Saul Fussiner, my screenwriting teacher at ECA - who had to LEAVE ECA because the job did not provide him with health benefits. I only mention this to show that the ECA teachers have suffered quite a bit all ready.

Caroline and Saul have constantly encouraged my work, encouraged me to submit my writing to film festival competitions and literary magazines. When I was searching for an internship in college, Caroline sent my resume to various contacts of hers in the entertainment industry. These contacts helped me acquire internships at MTV, THE COLBERT REPORT, NBC and FOCUS FEATURES. I have worked on several feature films through contacts made through these internships, such as the 2009 Sundance Film Festival selections ONCE MORE WITH FEELING and MYSTERY TEAM. And I pursue my own writing, continuing to write everyday, always being encouraged along the way by Caroline and Saul.

I can strongly say that I would not have gotten as far as I have, nor gone as far as I hopefully will, were it not for the teachers at the Educational Center for the Arts. Being artists themselves is what makes these people such incredibly advocates for the art work of so many young students. These teachers should be allowed to teach about these respective subjects without each needing a graduate teaching degree. It is one thing to teach math to hundreds of students, or social studies or chemistry. To teach the arts, what is important is having an open mind and being willing to encourage the work of others. The people who taught me at ECA were the brightest, most interesting teachers I've ever encountered. For them it is NOT about the money, it's about the students. And despite the claims of many teachers in the system, I don't know if the same could be said on their behalf.

I implore you, no, **BEG YOU**, to allow ECA to function how it has - successfully for so many years. People that I graduated with went to great colleges because of the impressive distinction of having gone to ECA - Hannah Goldfield went to COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, Jake Keyes is now attending YALE UNIVERSITY and Kathryn O'Malley is a student at WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY at ST. LOUIS. Also, many world renowned entertainers have graduated from ECA, such as JON BRION, composer for

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films such Academy Award nominated and winning films as ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND and MAGNOLIA. He also produced multi-platinum, Grammy-winning albums by artists like FIONA APPLE and KANYE WEST. Another successful alum is LAUREN AMBROSE, star of TV series SIX FEET UNDER, such films as CAN'T HARDLY WAIT, and star of many Broadway shows. By shutting down ECA, or by limiting the school in any way, you would essentially be costing the state billions of dollars in possible revenue from artists who graduate from ECA and then will later bring film, music, television, theatre, dance projects to the state and thus create jobs for an endless number of people. The repercussions of your decision are greater than you could ever realize.

The legacy of ECA is too great to ignore. It is a vital part of New Haven, as well as 19 school districts! I can honestly state that I can not FATHOM what my life would be like if ECA had never been a part of it. I'm not even sure if I'd still be alive. I beg of you - keep ECA open. Now and forever.

Yours Truly,

Ryan Sartor  
ECA Graduate, Class of '04