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SUPERINTENDENT

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**S.B. No 830 AN ACT CONCERNING THE GOVERNOR'S
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING EDUCATION**

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Lonnie Burt, and I am the Director of Foods and Nutrition Services for Hartford Public Schools. I am also Registered Dietitian. It was three years ago almost to the day that I sat before you giving testimony urging you to support the legislation that funded the Healthy Foods Certification. I am appearing before you today to address **S.B. No. 830**. Specifically, I am asking you not to support the bill as written which proposes cutting the Healthy Food Certification funding from 10 cents to 5 cents in subsection (a) of 10-215b of the general statutes.

Participation in the Healthy Foods Certification ensures that high quality nutritious meals and snacks are served from all sources at all times to our students. The funding that we have received has had a positive impact on the nutritional status of the students in Hartford. Nutritional changes such as limiting portion size, calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fats, and sugar have been implemented in a la carte sales. More whole grain items such as pizza, breads, crackers, and pasta have been incorporated into the menu. We have been able to further increase the variety of fresh fruits and vegetables that are offered daily including Chef Salads, baby carrots, fresh red bliss potatoes, melons, kiwi, strawberries and locally grown produce. The variety of daily choices has increased student consumption of fruits and vegetables considerably. Calcium fortified 100% fruit juice is now served in the after school snack program.

Participation in the Healthy Foods Certification mandates district fundraising efforts and food sales in vending machines and school stores also meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. In Hartford this has led to a significant decrease in fundraising activities involving food, which in the past typically were candy sales. School stores have opted out of selling food items or now offer healthy snack alternatives, mirroring what is sold in the cafeteria. When I visit the schools, I no longer see signs advertising bake sales. The overall school environment is now healthier. Students have embraced these changes and are learning how to incorporate good nutrition into their daily lives.

I clearly understand that times are tough for all budgets and we must all do our part to help this struggling economy but the proposed change represents a 50% decrease in funding; an extreme amount for any budget. For Hartford Public Schools, this cut would equate to an approximate loss of \$175,000 in funding. Put in simple terms this represents 800,000 portions of fresh fruits and/or vegetables annually or approximately 4,500 portions daily. This means that 25% of the 18,000 students who are served a school lunch every day in Hartford may not be offered a fresh fruit or Chef Salad. I urge you to not support this legislation, as it will put in jeopardy the health and wellness of not only Hartford children but all children throughout Connecticut.