

Slopak, Dianne

From: gammurphy@comcast.net
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2009 3:18 PM
To: Friis, John
Cc: jaya vijayasekar
Subject: Raised Bill #944

Dear Mr. Friis:

I am writing to provide testimony for tonight's public hearing on raised bill #944: An Act Concerning a Plan for Academic and Personal Success for Every Middle and High School Student.

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

My name is Gayle Murphy and as a high school world language teacher and Simsbury resident, I am proud of the superior education that many of our state's students receive. However, I recognize that Connecticut students today are not adequately prepared for the challenges of the current economic reality. In particular, I am concerned about the omission of a world language requirement in this bill, and am unable to support it without the reinstatement of such a requirement.

After teaching for sixteen years in public and private schools, from the middle school through the university level, I know that today's students require skills that will prepare them to operate in the global workplace. Current research and opinion states that we need to prepare our students to compete in this increasingly global economy. World languages prepare students not only in language, but also help students to:

- work in one of the 1,200 foreign-owned companies within the state of Connecticut
- function in another country if required to move for business reasons
- gain admission into most institutions of higher learning that require world language as a pre-requisite
- increase performance on standardized tests
- improve English-language arts and maths scores
- increase their cognitive skills
- become global citizens

When I began studying languages I was in the fifth grade. I was able to participate in a study abroad program and to live in France with a host family. That exchange began my love for languages, but I had no idea just how far my study of another language other than English would take me. I have had the opportunity to travel and work on three continents and share those experiences with my students. I have since learned to speak other languages including Spanish, German and Arabic. I have gained an appreciation for and understanding of cultures other than my own. Legislation should be proposed that includes world language among the other core subjects of math, English-language arts, and sciences.

I would call your attention to recent media sources such as the Hartford Courant article of February 21, 2009 which highlight the importance of world language instruction in

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Connecticut. Superintendent of schools for the town of Simsbury, Connecticut, Diane Ullman called for "a state strategy, a plan for international readiness." I hope that the Education Committee is ready to answer that call by voting against any bill that would exclude world language from education reform measures.

Thank you in advance for your support of education that prepares Connecticut students for the 21st century.

Sincerely,
Gayle Murphy