

March 23, 2009

Education Committee  
Room 3100, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Attention: Sen. Thomas P. Gaffey and Rep. Andrew M. Fleischmann

Re: Raised S.B. No. 1142, Session Year 2009

Dear Sen. Gaffey, Rep. Fleischmann, and the Education Committee members,

Please accept this letter as testimony for my opposition to S.B. No. 1142:  
***AN ACT CONCERNING RELIEF OF STATE MANDATES ON SCHOOL DISTRICTS.***  
***To delay the implementation of the in-school suspension mandate until July 1, 2011; to change the date in which a teacher is notified that his or her contract will not be renewed from April first to May first; to require that providers of school readiness programs submit space allotment reports every other month; to establish that the burden of proof lies with the party requesting a special education hearing; to provide that a local or regional board of education's commitment to provide special education to a child terminates upon the child's twenty-first birthday; and to eliminate certain reporting requirements on local and regional boards of education.***

I am the principal of a school for children with disabilities and I am opposed to SECTION 4 & 5 of this proposed bill. This bill will significantly harm students with disabilities and their families. I am writing this testimony on behalf of my students with disabilities and their families, most of who are unable to speak for themselves, and who do not comprehend the gravity of the consequences this bill would have on their ability to receive an appropriate education.

In support of our current law regarding students with special needs; Please remember that the purpose of special education is...

- (a) To ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living;
- (b) To ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected; (§ 300.1 IDEA 2004).

The purpose is NOT to cut costs nor weigh the competing needs of municipal budgets against costs of educating our most vulnerable children.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this point of view. Again, I strongly oppose this bill that can be extremely detrimental to our students and families.

Respectfully yours,



Jon Oddo  
Principal  
CT Center for Child Development