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*Testimony of Representative William Tong of Stamford
Before the Appropriations committee on Raise Bill 5034, An Act Concerning the Purchase of
Additional Credited Service in the Teacher's Retirement System for Service in Another State*

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, the Ranking Members and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Today, you are considering several bills dealing with the Teachers' Retirement System. I come before you to respectfully request an amendment to one of the bills that would allow for the purchase of Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) service rendered in the Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA) program.

The Manpower Development and Training Act was passed in 1962 and authorized funding for training and retraining of unemployed and underemployed. The intent of the legislation was to provide training services to economically disadvantaged youth. In 1973, the MDTA programs were consolidated into the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and then later reorganized into the Job Training Partnership Act in 1981.

Current state law already allows TRS members to purchase credit in the system for certain specified kinds of non-TRS service, such as teaching in a U.S. Defense Department school for military dependents, wartime U.S. military service, service in the U.S. Peace Corps and service in the U.S. Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program. Although MDTA service was similar in function to programs such as Peace Corps and VISTA, MDTA is not included in the list of qualified purchased TRS credits.

I recognize that in this economic and budgetary climate, the state's financial resources are extremely limited. However, the fiscal impact of this proposal is likely to be minimal. Although, we do not have an estimate of individuals who served in the MDTA program, just like the VISTA program, that number should not be significant. In addition, the state already accepts CETA service as purchasable in the TSA system, limiting the fiscal impact even further. Most importantly, I ask that you move this proposal forward so that the office of Fiscal Analysis could provide a fiscal note for the General Assembly's consideration.

Again, thank you for the opportunity today. I look forward to working with you on this and other important issues.