

Dear Mr. Calabrese,

Ref.: SB NO. 279 AN ACT CONCERNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TAUGHT IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

I am Prof. Gustavo Mejia, and I teach in the Department of Modern Languages at Central Connecticut State University. I am writing in support of the above mentioned bill concerning foreign languages taught in the public schools. Not only for obvious reasons of national security, but also for best business practices in an interconnected world, is it of paramount importance that our children learn to speak another language and become familiar with another culture. This is particularly true in times like these, when the hard realities of an economic downturn show that in order to thrive, our economy needs to attract businesses that will create quality jobs, and in order to do so the State must offer these businesses a highly qualified work-force that is aware of life beyond our borders.

This is because, in learning a foreign language, our children will develop many subsidiary skills that are widely sought after, and which are essential to the economy of the future. Knowledge of a foreign culture brings along respect for differences, and the effort to learn to speak a foreign language enhances our ability to communicate and negotiate meaning—skills that are generally deemed to be essential to economic prosperity and leadership in a globalized world.

Finally, I support this bill because children of school-age are in their best moment for language learning. Although it is possible to learn a language at a later time in one's life, the effort required is much greater and the results are seldom as satisfactory. Consequently, teaching a foreign language in the schools represents significant savings when compared with the cost of beginning language education in college.

Sincerely,

Gustavo Mejia, PhD  
3-8-2010