

Dear Representative Fleischmann,

My name is Lesa A. Milas, and I have served as a teacher at East Catholic High School in Manchester, for the past 25 years. I am a fully certified Connecticut teacher with a professional educator certificate. I maintain my CEU's and even act as a trainer for the Archdiocese of Hartford Office of Catholic Schools (a state CEU approved provider). As Catholic school teacher, I am contacting you to ask for your support of H.B. 5421, **An Act Concerning Educations and Administrators.**

In particular, there are two provisions in the bill that are important to Catholic school teachers.

1. The bill permits student teaching experience in private and religious schools to count towards preparation and eligibility to obtain initial educator certification.
2. The bill repeals a provision passed last year that doesn't allow for experienced teaching in nonpublic schools as a means of obtaining Professional Educator Certification. While it is not mandated by law, Catholic school teachers are required by the three (arch) dioceses to participate in professional development and all three offices are certified by the state to provide CEUs.. Private and religious schools receive Title II-A funds for teacher training.

It is unreasonable and discriminatory to disqualify a group of teachers to obtain this level of certification. The provision singles out non-public school teachers in a discriminatory fashion, since it exempts them on the basis of where they choose to teach, not on any continuing education requirements and experience.

Currently, at least 20 states allow college students to obtain teacher certification by student teaching at a private or religious school. All of these states make it voluntary for each University to allow their students to teach at a private or religious school. This includes our neighboring states of Massachusetts and New York .

The student teaching experience is one of the most important components of the teacher certification process. Allowing college students to student teach in a private or religious school setting would provide them with the skills to serve others and further the values and practices of their profession.

I hope I and my fellow Catholic and private school educators and our supporters can count on your support and I look forward to hearing your response.

*Lesa A. Milas  
Director of Academic Technology  
and Science Teacher  
East Catholic High School*