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***Testimony of Mary Loftus Levine, CEA Director of Policy and Professional  
Practice***

***Before the Education Committee on March 8, 2010***

***Raised Bill No. 5421 – LCO No. 1808  
An Act Concerning Educators and Administrators***

*and*

***Raised Bill No. 378 – LCO No. 1856***

***An Act Concerning the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program***

*and*

***Raised Bill No. 380 – LCO No. 1895  
An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education Credentialing***

My name is Mary Loftus Levine, Director of Policy and Professional Practice for the Connecticut Education Association, representing over 40,000 educators in our great public schools.

Regarding Raised Bill No. 5421, An Act Concerning Educators and Administrators, the title alone says it all. Our issue is simple – as educators we want administrators and superintendents who are also “educators.” This bill seems to be based on the age old and flawed philosophy that anyone can teach and in this case, even more offensive to us, is the philosophy that in this time of increasing challenges, anyone can “administrate.”

Although we are extremely sympathetic to the plight of the unemployed or to those who are now unable to find work coming out of college, we strongly object to legislation like this which would do nothing more than allow our schools to be led by people who know little or nothing about curriculum, how to actually teach, how to run a school or a school system. This bill would allow for the grocery manager at Shaw’s supermarket to become an administrator, or worse, a superintendent by taking a test or having some kind of management experience. This bill is not only bad public policy, it is insulting, along with being internally contradictory in its language. We also believe we cannot continue to substitute tests for coursework and authentic classroom experience.

It is time we stop lowering standards to allow some (perhaps with good intentions) to staff our schools, while demanding more and more from those who are already there working every day.

As we are poised to rewrite our evaluation standards, we want administrators and superintendents to have the background and skills to effectively implement them. We do not want unprepared people managing our schools. We ask that you not even consider this flawed bill.

CEA fully supports Raised Bill No. 378, An Act Concerning the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program. This bill provides the necessary economic relief for those new teachers who were not able to complete the new TEAM (Teacher Education and Mentoring) program because the program was postponed a year by the legislature last year in order to provide time to actually develop and pilot the TEAM program which replaced BEST. The bill also adds Health teachers to those who must complete TEAM in full beginning next year. Basically, this bill prevents new teachers from paying their certification renewal fee twice because the program is not yet available this school year. Please support this legislative fix.

Regarding Raised Bill No. 380, An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education Credentialing we support the concept of using unexpended funds to provide school readiness staff much needed professional development. As I testified last week, having a highly educated teacher is a major component of any successful early childhood program. Thank you