

**TESTIMONY
SHARON M. PALMER**

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 8, 2010

Good afternoon, Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischman and members of the Education Committee. Thank you for providing this hearing.

I am Sharon Palmer, President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse 28,000 member AFL-CIO union. I am here today to state our position regarding several bills before you.

I would like today to remark briefly on several bills and put AFT Connecticut on record regarding our positions.

H.B. 5421 An Act Concerning Educators and Administrators – We oppose accepting non-public school teaching for certification. The teaching experiences are not equivalent or comparable.

H.B. 5422 An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes – We support annual charter school reports, not biennial. Charters remain controversial and need close examination and analysis.

H.B. 5424 An Act Permitting Two or More Boards of Education to Jointly Purchase Employee Health Insurance - We conceptually support this bill and look forward to reviewing and commenting on additional proposed language. We would be more than willing to work with you on this issue.

H.B. 5425 An Act Concerning Special Education – We support the concept of changing the burden of proof to the requesting party. However, we believe legal aid should be available for poor parents.

S.B. 378 An Act Concerning T E A M – We support this bill to ensure a smooth and fair transition to the new T E A M program.

S.B. 379 An Act Concerning Vocational Technical Schools – We applaud the committee’s work to improve the Vocational Technical Schools. A special thank you goes to Senator Gaffey. You will hear from several of our members regarding this bill.

S.B. 380 An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education Credentialing – We support this bill and hope there will be funds available for professional development.

Thank you for your time and the hearing opportunity.

P.S. On a personal note, please pass the bonding for Waterford High School.