

Testimony of Kathleen Fitzgibbons
Retired Elementary Principal

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Raised Bill No. 5203, An Act Concerning State Service
Retirement Credit and Teachers' Retirement Credit

2 March 2010

Thank you Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee for allowing me to submit my testimony regarding Raised Bill No. 5203, An Act Concerning State Service Retirement Credit and Teachers' Retirement Credit.

In November of 2008 I started formal retirement proceedings with the help of Region One's Business Manager. We filled out the form for this purpose found on the Retirement Board's website. This form stated that I needed to be 55, have worked a total of 20 years and 15 of these years had to have been in Connecticut. I am 61, have worked 15 years in Connecticut Public Schools and bought back 5.4 years from out of state for \$31,752.15 which I paid to the Retirement Board on 4 October 2006, thus having a total of 20 years of service. On 24 November 2008 the Retirement Board printed and sent me my retirement benefit estimate which said I would receive 42% of my final average pay of \$97,718.33. To be sure that my "buy-back" check had been received and that it counted toward my 20 years of service I emailed the Retirement Board. On 4 December they returned my email stating that they did in fact receive my check and that it did count toward my 20 years of service. When this information was verified I then announced my intent to retire to my Cornwall Board of Education and Superintendent of Region One so that they would have ample time to fill my position.

These steps being completed I retired in June 2009. On 29 July 2009 I received a phone call stating that an error had been made in calculating my benefits. Instead of receiving 42 % of \$97,718.33 which equals \$41,041.69 per year, I was going to receive 31% which equals \$30,370.86 per year which is a \$10,670.83 difference. I made a careful, well planned decision to retire believing that the benefits quoted would be what I would receive. If I had known otherwise I would never have retired. The difference in benefits has caused me an extreme hardship.

I sincerely ask that you please pass Raised Bill No. 5203. Thank you.