

Testimony of Joan Malerba-Foran
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Testimony submitted to the Appropriations Committee
March 24th, 2011

Honorable Chairs, Members of the Appropriation Committee:

I have taught in a magnet, a public, and a charter school; each was challenging and rewarding; each demanded dedication and sacrifice. I fully intended to continue the experience of teaching in a variety of environments. That idea completely dissipated after entering a charter school. I am currently in my fifth year at *Common Ground High School*, and I hope to remain at this school until I retire. I hope to continue knowing students on a deep level as their mentor, teacher, advisor, even friend. I hope to continue developing curriculum, initiating programs, facilitating after-school clubs, travel and hike and bike and farm...and I hope to do it with students who know they are valued as much as students in any other school.

Can one put a price on a person? If one equates education with personal worth then the answer is "yes." If you think that is not so, then why is a degree from Yale University more prized than one from a community college? Let's not use semantics and soft logic to mask the fact that students who attend *Common Ground High School* do not have the same funds available to them as students in a public school. Why are my students being penalized? Why are they receiving less money? When I discuss this situation with people they look at me askance and have a variety of quick responses such as "Are you serious?" or "You must be mistaken!" or "That can't be right." And I assure them that charter schools receive about 75% of the per-pupil funding of their host districts. I always leave these conversations feeling frustrated or angry.

No professional should feel lonely, marginalized, or maligned. No professional should work at a disadvantage among his or her peers. Teaching is hard enough without being placed at the end of the line or—more accurately—in another room while the line forms. I want from my legislature the same respect, value, consideration and opportunity my colleagues in other educational institutions are accorded. I want from my legislature the same respect, value, consideration and opportunity given to my students that those in magnet or public institutions are accorded.

It is a shame that common sense can't be taught. If it could, we wouldn't be here today asking for the most common and sensible thing one could ask for: equality in a democracy

With respect and regards,

Joan Malerba-Foran