CEA
Advocating for teachers
and public education

Connecticut Education Association

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Testimony of Dr. John Yrchik
Executive Director, Connecticut Education Association

Before the Appropriations Committee

Regarding Proposed H.B. 5117 AAC Portions of the State Budget Appropriating Aid to Municipalities and S.B. 1121 (Raised) An Act Establishing A Task Force to Study the Distribution of State Funds to Municipalities

April 5, 2011

We are here today to address both **Proposed H.B. 5117 AAC Portions of the State Budget Appropriating Aid to Municipalities** and **S.B. 1121 (Raised) An Act Establishing A Task Force to Study the Distribution of State Funds to Municipalities**. Neither bill addresses a critical piece of Connecticut's constitutionally required effort to equalize the ability for municipalities to fund education – the minimum budget requirement, or MBR. To ensure that there is a minimal local effort to fund education, and to protect against inadequate taxing effort or the diversion of funds from our schools to other purposes, the MBR sets a threshold amount that municipalities must budget for their schools. We believe that without thorough consideration given to the effects of the MBR on towns, the under-funding of public schools – which has already caused higher class sizes and inadequate resources – could worsen.

Illustrating the importance of the MBR, the Education Committee referred **Substitute H.B. 6385 An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of The Governor Concerning Education** to this committee. The bill includes a new MBR provision that would allow a town to reduce its education budget by $3,000 for each enrollee fewer than the previous year. This is remarkable for a number of reasons, not least of which is that this puts salt on the wounds of an already significantly underfunded ECS. This provision would enable $18.4 million of local education funding to be swept out of school budgets by municipalities while ECS is underfunded by an estimated $700 million - $1.5 billion. We believe that H.B. 6385, coupled with underfunding, runs counter to the principle of equal

protection embraced by the Connecticut Supreme Court in Horton v. Meskill. The attached town-by-town run produced by OFA simulates the potential impact on local funding for schools.

The provision would also cause the convoluted and (hopefully) unintended consequence of allowing 92 towns to reduce their budget for education by a per pupil amount ($3,000) that is less than what they currently receive for each student in ECS. The proposal also does not provide an adjustment to account for the 42 districts experiencing increasing enrollments. For such districts, their effective MBR is decreasing in real terms. These absurd consequences would result in a financial shift of ECS funds from schools (and the purpose of equalizing funding) to other purposes, like local tax relief or local spending unrelated to education. Such distortions further exacerbate the underfunding of education.*

We urge committee members to consider the MBR in its deliberations regarding the bills before you. In consideration of HB5117, the MBR should not be used as a mechanism for increasing municipal aid at the expense of our schools. And, the MBR's impact should not be ignored in the work of the Task Force established in SB 1121.

We also urge you to act this year to correct the MBR by removing from substitute **House Bill 6385 section 19 (e) and (f) lines 805 to 832.** By doing this, you will be restoring the education dollars that the governor's budget allows to be cut. This concept, as we understand, was instituted only recently (PA 10-151) for unique and limited circumstances. The language was inserted to permit 3 or 4 towns to retroactively maintain local budgets that would have been out of compliance with the MBR. But, employing this language prospectively creates significant, unintended consequences.

*For your convenience, we have also attached a table showing per pupil funding for ECS – any town that receives less than $3,000 per pupil in ECS would ostensibly be able to use ECS funds for unintended purposes.

Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR)
Simulated 2011-12 MBR Impacts

District Name	(1) Projected SFSF + Budgeted Appropriation 2010-11	(3) 2011-12 ECS Resident Students	(4) 2010-11 ECS Resident Students	(5) Resident Student Reduction (Col 3 - Col 4)	(6) Resident Student Reduction Adjustment (Col 5 x $3,000)
Andover	7,525,332	637.41	627.97	0.00	0
Ansonia	26,077,214	2,791.03	2,867.97	(76.94)	230,820
Ashford	10,401,609	702.78	696.74	0.00	0
Avon	45,921,022	3,589.43	3,616.52	(27.09)	81,270
Barkhamsted	7,936,095	660.10	671.83	(11.73)	35,190
Berlin	37,060,337	3,215.27	3,219.34	(4.07)	12,210
Bethany	13,658,209	1,014.45	1,039.59	(25.14)	75,420
Bethel	37,504,875	2,953.22	3,061.31	(108.09)	324,270
Bloomfield	38,555,104	2,406.11	2,530.41	(124.30)	372,900
Bolton	12,072,251	832.62	835.55	(2.93)	8,790
Bozrah	5,538,491	357.91	387.81	(29.90)	89,700
Branford	47,738,219	3,503.19	3,568.06	(64.87)	194,610
Bridgeport	215,843,895	21,060.36	21,023.43	0.00	0
Bristol	102,563,330	8,762.06	8,784.64	(22.58)	67,740
Brookfield	35,419,378	2,938.21	2,993.06	(54.85)	164,550
Brooklyn	15,520,839	1,285.71	1,312.93	(27.22)	81,660
Canaan	2,812,995	141.99	136.10	0.00	0
Canterbury	11,513,996	721.99	770.26	(48.27)	144,810
Canton	22,283,809	1,806.09	1,793.32	0.00	0
Chaplin	5,597,212	291.48	288.89	0.00	0
Cheshire	60,377,875	4,793.48	4,943.37	(149.89)	449,670
Chester	8,132,718	556.14	574.04	(17.90)	53,700
Clinton	30,163,713	2,083.21	2,069.22	0.00	0
Colchester	34,295,413	3,135.15	3,251.46	(116.31)	348,930
Colebrook	3,572,260	253.20	255.02	(1.82)	5,460
Columbia	11,607,465	776.30	795.85	(19.55)	58,650
Cornwall	3,874,677	168.40	182.19	(13.79)	41,370
Coventry	23,237,730	1,927.33	1,985.69	(58.36)	175,080
Cromwell	25,450,000	2,032.10	2,050.33	(18.23)	54,690
Danbury	113,895,291	10,505.62	10,250.15	0.00	0
Darien	71,512,041	4,844.14	4,794.42	0.00	0
Deep River	4,710,507	653.40	654.64	(1.24)	3,720
Derby	17,734,779	1,590.12	1,573.03	0.00	0
Eastford	3,633,635	244.97	237.87	0.00	0
East Granby	13,050,000	929.00	939.07	(10.07)	30,210
East Haddam	18,075,681	1,373.29	1,418.00	(44.71)	134,130
East Hampton	25,879,307	2,003.01	2,040.47	(37.46)	112,380
East Hartford	88,449,583	8,025.42	8,009.39	0.00	0
East Haven	44,052,612	3,749.74	3,803.17	(53.43)	160,290
East Lyme	39,917,597	2,850.28	2,893.32	(43.04)	129,120
Easton	23,559,167	1,553.24	1,555.96	(2.72)	8,160
East Windsor	18,828,205	1,410.54	1,475.86	(65.32)	195,960
Ellington	29,429,989	2,733.43	2,696.76	0.00	0
Enfield	63,219,211	6,078.81	6,215.03	(136.22)	408,660
Essex	13,419,860	991.68	986.29	0.00	0
Fairfield	141,570,965	10,212.77	10,114.33	0.00	0
Farmington	51,491,192	4,127.77	4,143.27	(15.50)	46,500
Franklin	3,983,705	306.16	302.88	0.00	0
Glastonbury	88,144,618	6,990.54	6,998.18	(7.64)	22,920
Granby	26,667,594	2,205.55	2,258.61	(53.06)	159,180
Greenwich	131,191,499	8,749.72	8,708.13	0.00	0
Griswold	24,296,700	1,869.25	1,897.36	(28.11)	84,330
Groton	72,645,500	5,180.55	5,206.35	(25.80)	77,400
Guilford	50,021,963	3,706.17	3,733.58	(27.41)	82,230

Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR)
Simulated 2011-12 MBR Impacts

District Name	(1) Projected SFSF + Budgeted Appropriation 2010-11	(3) 2011-12 ECS Resident Students	(4) 2010-11 ECS Resident Students	(5) Resident Student Reduction (Col 3 - Col 4)	(6) Resident Student Reduction Adjustment (Col 5 x $3,000)
Hamden	78,336,250	6,943.28	6,878.82	0.00	0
Hampton	3,934,785	210.80	222.41	(11.61)	34,830
Hartford	285,804,001	20,852.25	21,441.19	(588.94)	1,766,820
Hartland	4,640,701	319.76	317.05	0.00	0
Hebron	23,379,566	2,123.78	2,118.04	0.00	0
Kent	6,220,138	356.95	354.95	0.00	0
Killingly	35,676,768	2,628.18	2,610.47	0.00	0
Lebanon	17,255,520	1,231.00	1,304.00	(73.00)	219,000
Ledyard	28,613,350	2,563.18	2,597.06	(33.88)	101,640
Lisbon	9,349,912	722.75	757.87	(35.12)	105,360
Litchfield	16,384,606	1,203.87	1,232.19	(28.32)	84,960
Madison	47,552,649	3,681.08	3,747.15	(66.07)	198,210
Manchester	97,784,441	7,532.26	7,497.96	0.00	0
Mansfield	40,199,094	1,985.06	1,956.89	0.00	0
Marlborough	13,292,115	1,236.10	1,219.21	0.00	0
Meriden	98,164,522	9,183.70	9,243.84	(60.14)	180,420
Middletown	69,350,000	5,383.58	5,340.37	0.00	0
Milford	83,229,005	7,044.63	7,166.76	(122.13)	366,390
Monroe	51,434,738	3,815.42	3,957.69	(142.27)	426,810
Montville	36,270,035	2,746.48	2,765.67	(19.19)	57,570
Naugatuck	57,092,650	4,854.68	5,107.76	(253.08)	759,240
New Britain	118,060,557	10,865.77	10,873.74	(7.97)	23,910
New Canaan	71,016,250	4,175.21	4,094.29	0.00	0
New Fairfield	33,837,796	2,871.78	2,984.60	(112.82)	338,460
New Hartford	14,773,721	1,126.03	1,151.31	(25.28)	75,840
New Haven	173,019,297	17,552.42	17,744.69	(192.27)	576,810
Newington	59,244,755	4,500.94	4,503.98	(3.04)	9,120
New London	39,724,405	3,550.36	3,463.72	0.00	0
New Milford	58,648,572	4,664.92	4,776.03	(111.11)	333,330
Newtown	67,194,734	5,478.39	5,534.24	(55.85)	167,550
Norfolk	4,179,264	246.98	252.58	(5.60)	16,800
North Branford	28,371,577	2,370.02	2,432.91	(62.89)	188,670
North Canaan	7,833,128	444.05	455.40	(11.35)	34,050
North Haven	43,949,350	3,634.30	3,736.51	(102.21)	306,630
North Stonington	12,801,172	803.28	812.89	(9.61)	28,830
Norwalk	149,743,081	11,164.72	10,942.91	0.00	0
Norwich	67,563,405	5,370.80	5,504.93	(134.13)	402,390
Old Saybrook	21,562,983	1,570.88	1,600.80	(29.92)	89,760
Orange	34,035,655	2,516.27	2,519.22	(2.95)	8,850
Oxford	25,415,475	2,272.19	2,239.53	0.00	0
Plainfield	32,381,505	2,534.23	2,572.90	(38.67)	116,010
Plainville	32,689,795	2,503.16	2,552.01	(48.85)	146,550
Plymouth	22,996,115	1,912.89	1,943.43	(30.54)	91,620
Pomfret	8,921,410	746.75	771.55	(24.80)	74,400
Portland	18,096,312	1,451.47	1,471.33	(19.86)	59,580
Preston	10,456,162	678.15	670.99	0.00	0
Putnam	16,195,623	1,283.28	1,239.34	0.00	0
Redding	30,482,024	1,726.95	1,752.41	(25.46)	76,380
Ridgefield	77,807,680	5,447.91	5,517.01	(69.10)	207,300
Rocky Hill	28,521,588	2,626.23	2,673.53	(47.30)	141,900
Salem	10,519,811	739.26	765.91	(26.65)	79,950
Salisbury	7,648,726	393.90	405.01	(11.11)	33,330
Scotland	4,016,373	236.20	248.88	(12.68)	38,040
Seymour	30,520,816	2,518.48	2,522.65	(4.17)	12,510

Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR)
Simulated 2011-12 MBR Impacts

District Name	(1) Projected SFSF + Budgeted Appropriation 2010-11	(3) 2011-12 ECS Resident Students	(4) 2010-11 ECS Resident Students	(5) Resident Student Reduction (Col 3 - Col 4)	(6) Resident Student Reduction Adjustment (Col 5 x $3,000)
Sharon	6,248,468	286.55	293.35	(6.80)	20,400
Shelton	63,100,000	5,397.29	5,572.44	(175.15)	525,450
Sherman	8,256,055	594.98	624.99	(30.01)	90,030
Simsbury	61,842,329	4,819.62	4,925.92	(106.30)	318,900
Somers	19,326,117	1,620.20	1,634.39	(14.19)	42,570
Southington	79,438,931	6,844.08	6,826.46	0.00	0
South Windsor	63,000,000	4,738.60	4,808.04	(69.44)	208,320
Sprague	5,841,675	453.20	444.22	0.00	0
Stafford	24,830,913	1,894.24	1,878.74	0.00	0
Stamford	223,382,203	15,128.27	14,965.30	0.00	0
Sterling	8,039,741	639.92	667.00	(27.08)	81,240
Stonington	31,474,838	2,546.36	2,566.74	(20.38)	61,140
Stratford	92,402,182	7,502.81	7,542.84	(40.03)	120,090
Suffield	30,405,137	2,410.29	2,429.82	(19.53)	58,590
Thomaston	13,740,750	1,258.79	1,286.29	(27.50)	82,500
Thompson	16,040,309	1,279.27	1,342.79	(63.52)	190,560
Tolland	33,808,535	3,165.82	3,241.09	(75.27)	225,810
Torrington	64,502,431	4,660.37	4,784.74	(124.37)	373,110
Trumbull	84,950,215	6,875.89	6,913.93	(38.04)	114,120
Union	1,594,664	109.00	110.19	(1.19)	3,570
Vernon	47,558,959	3,731.73	3,774.23	(42.50)	127,500
Voluntown	6,168,280	428.59	414.93	0.00	0
Wallingford	84,077,560	6,690.77	6,839.14	(148.37)	445,110
Waterbury	171,834,194	17,658.53	17,609.76	0.00	0
Waterford	41,666,612	3,163.77	3,241.03	(77.26)	231,780
Watertown	35,205,816	3,196.41	3,262.80	(66.39)	199,170
Westbrook	14,154,967	965.38	990.13	(24.75)	74,250
West Hartford	126,672,618	10,390.54	10,314.11	0.00	0
West Haven	80,924,049	7,389.73	7,419.41	(29.68)	89,040
Weston	44,697,024	2,546.77	2,558.96	(12.19)	36,570
Westport	96,079,659	5,770.56	5,736.80	0.00	0
Wethersfield	48,831,873	3,946.51	3,967.10	(20.59)	61,770
Willington	11,560,972	807.39	817.13	(9.74)	29,220
Wilton	70,276,022	4,331.64	4,360.56	(28.92)	86,760
Winchester	21,275,956	1,370.02	1,416.01	(45.99)	137,970
Windham	41,270,644	3,343.95	3,389.59	(45.64)	136,920
Windsor	60,724,647	4,146.58	4,255.81	(109.23)	327,690
Windsor Locks	26,759,841	1,890.98	1,937.22	(46.24)	138,720
Wolcott	31,470,976	2,995.82	3,026.15	(30.33)	90,990
Woodbridge	22,927,757	1,527.76	1,529.52	(1.76)	5,280
Woodstock	15,487,086	1,391.32	1,378.38	0.00	0
District No. 6	15,924,956	952.17	967.92	(15.75)	47,250
District No. 10	33,812,459	2,771.62	2,810.00	(38.38)	115,140
District No. 12	20,088,585	934.93	951.28	(16.35)	49,050
District No. 13	34,693,143	2,068.33	2,109.84	(41.51)	124,530
District No. 14	29,723,082	1,873.09	1,914.06	(40.97)	122,910
District No. 15	58,980,866	4,461.54	4,579.43	(117.89)	353,670
District No. 16	36,619,241	2,569.68	2,612.26	(42.58)	127,740
District No. 17	37,374,425	2,494.00	2,511.04	(17.04)	51,120
District No. 18	27,242,437	1,530.56	1,525.47	0.00	0
Total	$6,874,141,426	544,445.07	548,886.95	(6,144.35)	$18,433,050

DRG	Town Name	2009-11 Entitlement	ECS Aid Per Student
	Totals	1,889,607,093	
C	Andover	2,330,856	3,712
H	Ansonia	15,031,668	5,241
E	Ashford	3,896,069	5,592
B	Avon	1,232,688	341
C	Barkhamsted	1,615,872	2,405
E	Beacon Falls	4,044,804	3,896
D	Berlin	6,169,410	1,916
C	Bethany	2,030,845	1,954
D	Bethel	8,157,837	2,665
C	Bethlehem	1,318,171	2,651
G	Bloomfield	5,410,345	2,138
C	Bolton	3,015,660	3,609
E	Bozrah	1,229,255	3,170
D	Branford	1,759,095	493
I	Bridgeport	164,195,344	7,810
C	Bridgewater	137,292	592
G	Bristol	41,657,314	4,742
B	Brookfield	1,530,693	511
E	Brooklyn	6,978,295	5,315
C	Burlington	4,295,578	2,292
E	Canaan	207,146	1,522
F	Canterbury	4,733,625	6,145
C	Canton	3,348,790	1,867
E	Chaplin	1,880,888	6,511
B	Cheshire	9,298,837	1,881
E	Chester	665,733	1,160
D	Clinton	6,465,651	3,125
D	Colchester	13,547,231	4,167
E	Colebrook	495,044	1,941
C	Columbia	2,550,037	3,204
C	Cornwall	85,322	468
E	Coventry	8,845,691	4,455
D	Cromwell	4,313,692	2,104
H	Danbury	22,857,956	2,230
A	Darien	1,616,006	337
E	Deep River	1,687,351	2,578
H	Derby	6,865,689	4,365
C	Durham	3,954,812	2,883
D	East Granby	1,301,142	1,386
E	East Haddam	3,718,223	2,622
D	East Hampton	7,595,720	3,723
H	East Hartford	41,710,817	5,208

DRG	Town Name	2009-11 Entitlement	ECS Aid Per Student
G	East Haven	18,764,125	4,934
D	East Lyme	7,100,611	2,454
F	East Windsor	5,482,135	3,715
E	Eastford	1,109,873	4,666
A	Easton	593,868	382
C	Ellington	9,504,917	3,525
F	Enfield	28,380,144	4,566
C	Essex	389,697	395
B	Fairfield	3,590,008	355
B	Farmington	1,611,013	389
E	Franklin	941,077	3,107
B	Glastonbury	6,201,152	886
E	Goshen	218,188	504
B	Granby	5,394,276	2,388
B	Greenwich	3,418,642	393
F	Griswold	10,735,024	5,658
G	Groton	25,374,989	4,874
B	Guilford	3,058,981	819
C	Haddam	1,728,610	1,269
G	Hamden	23,030,761	3,348
E	Hampton	1,337,582	6,014
I	Hartford	187,974,890	8,767
E	Hartland	1,350,837	4,261
C	Harwinton	2,728,401	2,916
C	Hebron	6,872,931	3,245
E	Kent	167,342	471
G	Killingly	15,245,633	5,840
C	Killingworth	2,227,467	1,938
E	Lebanon	5,467,634	4,193
D	Ledyard	12,030,465	4,632
E	Lisbon	3,899,238	5,145
E	Litchfield	1,479,851	1,201
C	Lyme	145,556	462
B	Madison	1,576,061	421
G	Manchester	30,619,100	4,084
C	Mansfield	10,070,677	5,146
C	Marlborough	3,124,421	2,563
H	Meriden	53,783,711	5,818
B	Middlebury	684,186	499
C	Middlefield	2,100,239	2,845
G	Middletown	16,652,386	3,118
D	Milford	10,728,519	1,497
B	Monroe	6,572,118	1,661
F	Montville	12,549,431	4,538

DRG	Town Name	2009-11 Entitlement	ECS Aid Per Student
E	Morris	657,975	1,832
G	Naugatuck	29,211,401	5,719
I	New Britain	73,929,296	6,799
A	New Canaan	1,495,604	365
B	New Fairfield	4,414,083	1,479
C	New Hartford	3,143,902	2,731
I	New Haven	142,509,525	8,031
I	New London	22,940,565	6,623
D	New Milford	11,939,587	2,500
D	Newington	12,632,615	2,805
B	Newtown	4,309,646	779
E	Norfolk	381,414	1,510
E	North Branford	8,117,122	3,336
F	North Canaan	2,064,592	4,534
D	North Haven	3,174,940	850
E	North Stonington	2,892,440	3,558
H	Norwalk	10,095,131	923
H	Norwich	32,316,543	5,870
C	Old Lyme	605,586	500
D	Old Saybrook	652,677	408
B	Orange	1,055,910	419
C	Oxford	4,606,861	2,057
G	Plainfield	15,353,204	5,967
F	Plainville	10,161,853	3,982
F	Plymouth	9,743,272	5,013
C	Pomfret	3,092,817	4,009
E	Portland	4,272,257	2,904
E	Preston	3,057,025	4,556
E	Prospect	5,319,201	3,379
G	Putnam	8,071,851	6,513
A	Redding	687,733	392
A	Ridgefield	2,063,814	374
D	Rocky Hill	3,355,227	1,255
C	Roxbury	158,114	540
C	Salem	3,099,694	4,047
E	Salisbury	187,266	462
E	Scotland	1,444,458	5,804
F	Seymour	9,836,508	3,899
E	Sharon	145,798	497
D	Shelton	4,975,852	893
C	Sherman	244,327	391
B	Simsbury	5,367,517	1,090
C	Somers	5,918,636	3,621
B	South Windsor	12,858,826	2,674

DRG	Town Name	2009-11 Entitlement	ECS Aid Per Student
B	Southbury	2,422,233	755
D	Southington	19,839,108	2,906
F	Sprague	2,600,651	5,854
F	Stafford	9,809,424	5,221
H	Stamford	7,978,877	533
F	Sterling	3,166,394	4,747
D	Stonington	2,061,204	803
G	Stratford	20,495,602	2,717
C	Suffield	6,082,494	2,503
E	Thomaston	5,630,307	4,377
F	Thompson	7,608,489	5,666
C	Tolland	10,759,283	3,320
G	Torrington	23,933,343	5,002
B	Trumbull	3,031,988	439
E	Union	239,576	2,174
G	Vernon	17,645,165	4,675
F	Voluntown	2,536,177	6,112
D	Wallingford	21,440,233	3,135
E	Warren	99,777	567
C	Washington	240,147	563
I	Waterbury	113,617,182	6,452
D	Waterford	1,445,404	446
D	Watertown	11,749,383	3,601
B	West Hartford	16,076,120	1,559
H	West Haven	41,399,303	5,580
E	Westbrook	427,677	432
A	Weston	948,564	371
A	Westport	1,988,255	347
D	Wethersfield	8,018,422	2,021
E	Willington	3,676,637	4,499
A	Wilton	1,557,195	357
G	Winchester	7,823,991	5,525
I	Windham	24,169,717	7,131
D	Windsor	11,547,663	2,713
F	Windsor Locks	4,652,368	2,402
F	Wolcott	13,539,371	4,474
B	Woodbridge	721,370	472
C	Woodbury	876,018	618
E	Woodstock	5,390,055	3,910