

EAST SHORE REGION ADULT & CONTINUING EDUCATION

E R A C E

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Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee:

My name is Paul Dzialo and I am the Director of ERACE Adult Services which serves 5 towns in South Connecticut.

As a Director of Adult Education in Connecticut who has been involved in the Adult Credit Diploma program for 10 years I have concerns regarding changing the age of withdrawal from high school in Bill # 6585 when the new law raising the withdrawal age to 17 does not take effect until July 1, 2011.

I would like to share with you my thoughts and experiences of working with young adult when they leave the traditional high school. When a student enters adult education I talk to them about why they leave their high school. The reasons why are very interesting and touching. Students tell me that they leave school because of emotional, financial, family needs, school phoebe and many other issues. That being said, I'm very worry about the loss of alternative opportunities for young adults to earn their high school diploma. Starting July 1st 2011 the age is increased to 17 years old for high school withdrawal. If the age is increased to 18years old I feel very sorry for the student that needs an alternative to complete their high school diploma.

I would recommend that you look at the great results that adult education programs are experiencing via the SDE CARS data base. Connecticut Adult Education programs are effectively educating adults in the credit diploma program and demonstrating our ability to prepare the student for post secondary education. Ct Adult Education programs have a great collaboration with their local community college when transitioning a student from high school to the college environment.

In conclusion, if a student ages 16, 17, or 18 doesn't attend school what other educational opportunities will they have for them in Ct? If a student ages 16, 17 or 18 has problems with attending traditional high school and can't learn in the traditional format what other educational opportunities will they have for them in Ct?

I'm asking you not change the withdraw age to 18years old and also consider lowering the age to 16 years old. The traditional high schools are doing a great job, but that model doesn't fit every student in Ct.

Thank you for consideration of my comments and I would be happy to answer any question you may have.

Respectfully

Paul Dzialo
ERACE Director