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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF  
ROBYN KAPLAN-CHO, RETIREMENT SPECIALIST  
CONNECTICUT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (CEA)**

**REGARDING SECTION 1 OF HOUSE BILL NO. 1038  
"AAC INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS"**

**BEFORE THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**FEBRUARY 28, 2011**

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the  
Education Committee.

My name is Robyn Kaplan-Cho and I am employed by the Connecticut  
Education Association where my responsibilities include advising and  
educating teachers about special education laws and regulations.

H.B. 1038 stems from the recommendations of the legislatively created  
IEP Task Force that met over the past few months. It bears noting that of  
the 21 appointed members of the Task Force, there was not one regular or  
special education teacher. The only representative of the non-  
administrative certified staff was a school psychologist. The majority of  
the members were administrators, parents, and parent advocates. This was  
disheartening given the vital role that both regular and special educators  
play in the special education process.

Throughout the meetings, there was much discussion among the Task  
Force members of the increasingly key role that regular educators, in  
particular, play in the lives of special education students given that more  
special education students than ever are being included in regular  
education placements. Even after the Task Force members recognized the  
need to seek a broader perspective from school staff and approximately  
ten "experts" were invited to address the Task Force, not one actively  
employed special or regular education teacher was included.

Consequently, CEA welcomes the opportunity to provide the perspective of all certified school staff on this bill.

Section 1 of this proposal amends 10-76a(8) to require districts to offer parents a pre-PPT meeting specifically to discuss evaluation results before the initial PPT meeting. This section also appears to require all members of the PPT to attend such pre-meeting. In practice, parental requests for pre-meetings with select staff members are accommodated as a courtesy when it is possible to do so. However, these new requirements could become very time consuming and impractical for school district staff that is already stretched thin and facing ever-increasing obligations and mandates competing for time. Moreover, we are concerned that if a pre-PPT meeting is required when requested by a parent, it could result in extending the timeline for implementing the IEP, which may not ultimately be in the best interest of the student.

Section 1 also mandates that parents receive evaluation results at least 5 days prior to the PPT meeting. There is no question that it is more beneficial for the parents to have an opportunity to read the evaluation information prior to attending the PPT meeting. In fact, many districts already supply this information to parents in advance of the PPT as a matter of practice. However, given diminishing resources and the number of people and procedures involved in the evaluation process, it is not always possible to do this. Establishing a deadline 5 days prior to the initial PPT – especially if the pre-meeting proposed in this bill is also enacted – could create unnecessary obstacles resulting in missed deadlines and/or diminishing quality of the evaluation itself.

Therefore, CEA supports the goal of providing parents with evaluation results prior to the initial PPT meeting provided that sufficient staffing levels and resources are available to complete this task within the proposed mandated time frame.

Thank you for your time and consideration.