CBIA
CONNECTICUT BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
THURSDAY, MARCH 17TH 2011

Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Louis Bach and I am testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA's 10,000 member companies represent the broad diversity of private enterprise in the state, and our membership is overwhelmingly comprised of small businesses with fewer than 50 employees.

SB 1160 AAC SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION, THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL TEACHER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM, AND TEACHER TENURE LAWS AND COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS is a measure we support with modifications.

In order to assure that Connecticut's schoolchildren are receiving the best possible classroom instruction it is imperative that teacher evaluations look at teacher effectiveness as related to student outcomes. We would like to see expanded application of outcome-based evaluation systems. Effectiveness should not be limited to dismissal, as it is in this proposal, but should be part of attaining tenure in the first place. Effectiveness evaluation can and should be applied "up the ladder," as well, with principals and administrators held to similar measurable standards.

This proposal amends Public Act 10.111 in order to clearly mandate the development of a model teacher performance evaluation system by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council. We see that as a positive change. Because the Advisory Council would be vested with the sole responsibility for teacher evaluations under this legislation, however, we feel that its composition should reflect a greater range of viewpoints.

SB 1160 §3 describes the composition of the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council and should include language appointing appropriate additional members, specifically representatives from the Connecticut Council on Education Reform. Inclusion of respected education reformers who lack a direct stake in the process will lend an expanded sense of sincerity to the process, and more importantly, it will improve the final product.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions that I can.

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