



March 19, 2012

General Assembly
Appropriations Committee
Room 2700, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: H.B. 5443 – An Act Concerning Benefits for Surviving Spouses Under the Teachers' Retirement System

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Daniel Medress, and I am the Political Education Director for CSEA/SEIU, Local 2001. I offer this testimony in support of H.B. 5443, An Act Concerning Benefits for Surviving Spouses Under the Teachers' Retirement System.

Among the over 12,000 retired public employees represented by CSEA are participants in the Teachers' Retirement System. The tragic situation of not updating one's declared pension beneficiary that this bill seeks to correct has been seen before. H.B. 5443 offers a reasonable solution to a heartbreaking problem.

The surviving beneficiaries of dedicated teachers who paid into their pension should not suffer the penalty this bill addresses when they are already coming to terms with the loss of a loved one. It is unfortunate that for lack of a form, husbands, wives, and children are denied the full benefits to which they are entitled. I urge you to support H.B. 5443. There is no reason that any family should be punished for factors beyond their control.

Please honor the service teachers provide to the children of our state and pass H.B. 5443.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Daniel I. Medress

Political Education Director, CSEA/SEIU, Local 2001