

***Remarks of Carole Marvin  
Second Grade Teacher  
East Haddam Public Schools***

**For the Education Committee  
On Senate Bill No. 24  
Sections 29 and 30, *Teacher Tenure and Teacher Evaluation***

**February 21, 2012**

My name is Carole Marvin, and I am a second grade teacher in Haddam.

I would like to express my concerns about the public perception of teacher tenure. Teachers don't earn tenure just by "showing up" for work. A majority of teachers including myself do more than just "show up" for work spending countless hours of personal time and money to give our students the best education possible. Tenure does not guarantee that a teacher will keep his or her job. It is simply due process before a teacher can be terminated. I have tenure and am still held accountable by yearly professional growth activities and evaluations.

Teachers as a whole are dedicated and take their jobs extremely seriously. When school budgets fall short, they open their wallets to provide their students with additional materials and resources. They spend time, at the expense of their personal lives, to attend workshops, read current educational materials, plan creative lessons, contact families, prepare materials, organize classrooms, and participate in professional growth activities and committees, as well as countless other tasks that go along with the job. Teachers do this without the expectation of recognition, but because they cherish the profession and the students with whom they work.

I am adamantly opposed to the proposal that teachers need to re-earn tenure yearly by meeting performance standards that include student performance. All teachers strive to have their students make the maximum growth and perform well on the multitude of assessments that are given. However, teachers can only be responsible for the students during the school day and not for their home environment and relationships, health and mental status, parental involvement, self motivation and discipline. So many factors facing students have a bearing on their educational success. Should a teacher be penalized for students that don't come to school prepared to learn and for families that don't make education a priority?

I personally have experienced a recent forced grade level change at my school due to student enrollment numbers. For a year, this change put me at a disadvantage for effectiveness in the classroom as I was given no additional training, assistance, resources or funds to learn an entirely new curriculum. This is not an uncommon experience for many teachers during the course of their careers. Your proposal states that it's the job of the local districts to make sure teachers have every chance to succeed and, if you struggle, the district will provide support and professional development to help you get back on track. Most school districts can't afford to provide quality professional development and there is no money provided for teachers in new positions to access additional training. Should a teacher be penalized for this?

An essential part of being an exemplary teacher is to work effectively with the numerous professionals found within a school. Collegiality among teachers is critical to student success as a great deal of support and sharing occur which translates into improved instruction. If school systems are allowed to offer career advancement opportunities and financial incentives as a way of rewarding teachers who consistently receive high performance ratings, what will this do to collegiality and teacher morale? How will professionals that work under teacher contracts, but don't have a homeroom of students that they are responsible for (i.e. social workers, specials educators, math/reading specialists etc.) be judged for their effectiveness? This will be divisive among educators. This will leave hard working teachers at the mercy of test scores and administrators subjective opinions of them.

I understand the need of legislators to want what is best for the students of Connecticut. Teachers wholeheartedly supported Governor Malloy in his election as he promised to support teachers. Declaring a war on the teaching profession isn't the way to accomplish this. I urge you to reconsider this bill and consult with classroom teachers to gain their perspective on improvements for schools. As a profession, teachers are hard working, caring and passionate about providing the best for students.