

**Testimony
Susan Bransfield
Town of Portland
Before the Education Committee
of the Connecticut General Assembly
February 22, 2012**

Re: SB-24, An Act Concerning Educational Competitiveness

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **SB-24, An Act Concerning Educational Competitiveness**.

We fully support Governor Dannel P. Malloy's efforts to target additional resources to education by targeting an additional \$50 million to the Education Cost Sharing grant program and increasing the foundation level to \$12,000. These are important steps toward achieving the goal of fully funding education.

However, I am concerned with certain aspects of the proposed changes in funding. In particular, I oppose provisions requiring towns to pay \$1,000 for every student who decides to attend a charter school. I am also concerned about shifting funding for charter schools into the ECS grant line item. These provisions will erode our town-based public school system by siphoning off already limited resources to fund public and private charter schools in other towns and cities.

It also puts additional pressure on towns to fill unexpected gaps in funding from year to year based on the number of students attending charter schools. Particularly in small towns, the loss of thousands of dollars can be a significant percentage of the education budget.

In many ways, our local schools are the backbone of our communities. But by transferring much-needed dollars from the public schools to the charter schools in other towns, this proposal will weaken local schools. I urge you to reject the mandate that towns pay \$1000 out of their school budgets for students to attend charter schools and, instead, look for ways to strengthen our local public schools to help students meet higher academic standards of excellence.