

*Remarks of Brian Jacobs
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**Before the Education Committee
On S.B. No. 24, AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS
Section 29, *Teacher Tenure***

February 21, 2012

Good afternoon Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Brian Jacobs, and I'm a History and Stage Tech teacher in West Hartford. I am here today to comment on Senate Bill 24, Section 29.

Governor Malloy's proposed "education overhaul" is reminiscent to this history teacher of President Truman's "loyalty review program" in 1947. Just as Truman's effort to increase public confidence in the faithfulness and devotion of their government officials succeeded only in weakening our nation by spreading paranoia and mistrust, Governor Malloy's plan will only weaken our state's educational system by attacking the very people who are the backbone of public education. Governor Malloy seems to be under the impression that if you have a pulse and show up for class at the appointed times, you can make a career as a teacher in Connecticut. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The system that we currently have in place demands teachers to prove their mettle over a period of years, demonstrating their ability to support student achievement through numerous professional reviews by multiple individuals, including department supervisors, assistant principals, and building principals. Their track to and through tenure is based on proven ability and a commitment to grow as a professional, engaging in professional development activities and acquiring advanced degrees in their field. Governor Malloy's proposed bill would overall put a teacher's tenure under the purview of a single individual, and lifts the expectation that a teacher will work toward a Master's degree. Rather than create an environment where dedicated, committed professionals will thrive, Governor Malloy's plan will in fact create the situation that he is trying to avoid: a public school system where anyone who shows up on time will get tenure. Dedicated professionals will fall by the wayside when they should be thrust into the front lines of Connecticut's classrooms.

Weakening tenure standards will not improve Connecticut's schools. Placing teacher review under the subjective judgment of *one* individual will not improve Connecticut's schools. If Governor Malloy wants to strengthen our school systems, the state must support its dedicated and professional teachers, not attack them. If this "educational overhaul" is passed, Connecticut will soon find itself in an educational crisis the likes of which our government cannot imagine.