

*Remarks of
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**Before the Education Committee
On S.B. No. 24, AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS
Section 1, 3, 4, and 5 - Teacher evaluation/tenure**

February 21, 2012

Good afternoon Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Carmela Vavrinec, and I'm a science teacher in Stamford. I am here today to comment on Senate Bill 24, Sections 1, 3, 4, and 5. When a person graduates from medical school and enters into a practice he or she takes the Hippocratic Oath, "first do no harm". As an educator I have always believed it should also hold true for teachers and those making the decisions that directly impact the welfare of children.

Senate Bill 24 has the potential to cause direct harm to our children. Lowering the standards for teacher certification while raising the standards for teacher evaluation is counter intuitive and it just does not make any sense. Education is not static, best practices change as do our learners. I gained so much more knowledge when pursuing my Master's degree in education – valuable and practical experience that I could apply in the classroom. It has made me a better teacher but if the degree were not required, I am not sure that I would have spent thousands of dollars and countless hours of study to complete the degree.

Teacher evaluations connected to student performance on flawed standardized tests such as the CAPT is unacceptable. The CAPT, which is administered in March to all 10th graders, was never developed to assess teachers. The idea was to assess what a child learned from sixth to tenth grade, however it never took into consideration the transient populations of many urban areas, let alone the percentage on non-English speaking students forced to take the test.

Many of our low performing schools are in our large urban cities: Bridgeport, Hartford and Stamford, which is where I teach. Our budgets have been severely cut, as has state funding. We have been asked to do more with less. The proposals under this bill will only make matters worse. Hiring less qualified teachers and disrespecting the high standards teachers have achieved to gain certification is the wrong path to follow to improve education in this state.

Simply put, if I needed surgery I would want the best possible person to do the job, not someone that graduated at the bottom of their class. I would not trust my life to them. We should not entrust our children's education, which will affect the rest of their lives, to anything less than the best educators.

I strongly implore you to not support this bill.