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**Comments to the Education Committee
On S.B. No. 24, AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS
Section 28: *Certificate Requirements***

February 21, 2012

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

My name is John Evans, and I'm an English teacher in Trumbull. I am commenting on Senate Bill 24, Section 28.

I am writing because I have very serious concerns about Governor Malloy's plan and how it will affect teachers and our students. His new plan requires financial uncertainty for all teachers and sets the stage for districts to value teachers who are not life-long learners. I have worked hard for my advanced degrees, and I am compensated for them in my salary. Malloy's plan would mean the extra work and thousands of dollars I put into them would mean nothing. I found my graduate work to be what really has helped me to shape and perfect my teaching. If schools are not requiring a Master's degree and not compensating teachers who have earned them, teachers will not pursue these degrees. This could lead to serious trouble for graduate schools of education across the state. Won't they go bankrupt if teachers cannot afford to pursue advanced degrees and have no motivation to do so?

The Malloy plan is supposed to close the achievement gap, but I believe it will do the opposite. Communities that value teachers with advanced degrees and experience are going to seek these teachers out, and pay highly for them. This will lead to a greater disparity between districts, as the best and most qualified teachers will move to districts that value their educational background and graduate experience, and the less qualified teachers will only work in lower paying districts. What is the motivation to work in low paying districts, where your evaluations will be low because they're linked to student achievement, when you can work in a district with higher scores, more administrative and parent support, and richer resources?

Teachers work hard every day. There is an evaluation system in place right now which rewards hard work and weeds out teachers who do not belong in the profession. It is a myth that tenure protects bad teachers. It only ensures that all teachers are treated fairly in the evaluation and termination process. The proposed evaluation procedure, which would affect my pay on a year to year basis, would be impacted most greatly by which administrator in my building is evaluating me and how much he or she likes me. The administrative team in my building is not consistent in how they discipline our students; how can they be trusted to be consistent with their evaluation techniques?

Malloy's plan opens the door to private industries making their way into our public schools and making money off of them. No wonder this plan is moving along so quickly. The governor has appointed a commissioner of education with this philosophy, and the idea has leaked into the plans. I believe that public schools run best when there is no way for independent, for-profit organizations—such as charter schools partially funded by public school districts but run by independent entrepreneurs—to make money off of the success of hardworking teachers and school districts. Do we want public education or private companies in each town? We can't have both.

Malloy's plan does not address the fact that student achievement hinges greatly on family life and home support. We can blame teachers all we want, but the fact of the matter is that students are more successful when they come from homes that encourage reading and value education. If anything, we need to think about how we could develop more early intervention programs before students even enter the public schools.

I believe the most disturbing parts of this plan will only drive good educators away from the profession. The governor's plan makes teachers' prospects of owning homes and supporting their own children very grim when so many uncontrollable factors could determine how much money they make each year. I obtained a sixth year degree and worked hard at my craft so I could be treated like a professional, not an employee with the level of job and compensation security of a door to door salesman. I fear that with all of these changes, we are going to keep our brightest students from even thinking about entering the field of education in the future, and our system will suffer greatly. Our students need highly educated, highly motivated teachers to make a difference in their lives. Governor Malloy's plan cripples everything educators have been working for since the seventies and makes way for a disturbing new climate where cheaper, less experienced teachers are valued over highly-qualified educators with a high enough quality of life to participate in the middle class.

Thank you for reading.