

*Remarks of Scott Minnick
Glastonbury teacher
East Hampton BOE member/parent*

**Before the Education Committee
On S.B. No. 24, AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION COMPETITIVENESS
Section 28 and 31-Teacher Evaluations and BOE**

February 21, 2012

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

My name is Scott Minnick and I am here today to comment on Senate Bill 24 to which I am in complete opposition as a teacher in Glastonbury, an elected BOE member in East Hampton, and as a parent of two schoolchildren.

This scapegoat legislation seeks to apply corporate business philosophy to public education to an exaggerated degree. This bill will set up scenarios whereby BOE's will be able to put pressure on administrators to keep costs down by giving poorer teacher observations. In fact, this bill encourages this. The focus of these high stakes evaluations will now have the financial repercussions for teachers and not advance the educational benefits of our students. Also, with so many individual administrators conducting their own observations, it takes away any objective standards of evaluation.

Teachers currently have and defend high standards and expectations as part of their professional responsibilities to student achievement. However, when a teacher's personal livelihood will suffer by supporting these standards, a teacher will consider backing down. The result? Demoralized teachers, disheartened parents, and students with diluted educational programs who are not as prepared to face the adult world as they should be.

The teaching profession needs, and currently possesses, a degree of insulation from the political whims and pressures of municipal BOE volunteers. This bill strips these protections away. This bill doesn't address the problems of our state schools and, if passed, will create many more. This legislation has not been thought through. It is not feasible. It is destructive on many levels.

Teaching is a noble and highly regarded profession. Teachers teach for their love of children not for their love of money. They believe in education. It is clear that Malloy and any legislative supporters of this bill have a high degree of suspicion against teachers – a sentiment not shared by the majority of people in Connecticut. He wants to root out the "bad" teachers. By passing this bill, you will help him drive good teachers out and dissuade future ones from entering.