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State Representative Michelle Cook
Legislative Office Building
Room 4044
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Re: Stand Up and Defend Educators!

Dear Representative Cook:

Today I write as a constituent and a voter with an important message and an urgent request. As a teacher in the State of Connecticut for the past 15 years and a parent for 8 of those years, I have grave concerns about both the course of public education and the future of my profession. Governor Malloy has proposed changes to Connecticut's educational system that I believe are, at best, ill-conceived and, at worst, dangerous and counter-productive.

Specifically, I encourage you to ask the Governor to fix tenure and dismissal by requiring due process based on "just cause", which ensures that a neutral hearing officer can issue a fair, binding decision in a teacher termination hearing. The misperceptions that exist about tenure frighten and frustrate me as an educator. The beliefs that I have a "job for life" and can never be fired are absolutely inaccurate. Just like any other employee, I am evaluated and held to high standards. If I should fail to meet the expectations of my employer, I can—in fact—be terminated. Unfortunately, stories on the news make it sound as if thousands of teachers are sitting in rooms milking the system, not working while collecting a salary. This perception is simply not accurate. I know—and know quite well—that if I fail to conduct myself professionally or meet the expectations of my employer, I will find myself without a teaching position.

Please take a stand and help my voice be heard. Encourage the governor to allow educated professionals to determine the course for the educational system going forward. All of our futures depend upon making wise—not reactive—choices in the best interest of our state's children.

Concerned,

Shannon L. Perreault
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