

*Remarks of
teacher
Bridgeport*

Before the Education Committee
On Senate Bill 24, Section (*put in section # here*)
(*write topic, in general here; e.g., teacher evaluation*)

February 21, 2012

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

My name is Silvia Cancellieri-Adams , and I'm a music teacher in Bridgeport . I am here today to comment on Senate Bill 24, Section 28 and 31.

Section 28- Initial certificate requirements – professional certificate requirements -master certificate requirements - elimination of provisional certificate elimination of CEUs - professional development - certification fees.

As a certified educator in the State of Connecticut, I am outraged at the proposed legislation to change the certification standards for the state. I feel that the ideas that the Governor has put forth will not help to strengthen education in the state, but they will hurt the students and teachers in the state.

The proposed legislation to weaken certification standards by eliminating the requirement for a masters degree, as well as eliminating National Board Certification for out-of state educators, and utilizing a certification system that relies on local boards of education and administrators is a huge step back in educational philosophy and practice that will cause educators to ultimately leave the state, and cause the educational quality to suffer.

Local Boards of Education are not equipped to certify teachers. If this occurs, there will be different standards in every town in the state of CT. This is outrageous, and will do nothing to help the students in the state. There is a large achievement gap in the state now, between wealthy towns and poor towns, I see it every day teaching in Bridgeport, in Fairfield County, and it will get worse if these measures are passed. The poorer towns will have lower standards, so it will be easier to hire teachers, and the wealthy towns will have high standards, because they will be able to afford to hire better teachers. Then job of the state is to assure that every student, no matter where they live, has the same access to a high quality education. Having state wide standards for certification, does that. Eliminating state wide standards, and replacing them with local standards, will change and lessen the quality of students all over the state. This change will also make it extremely difficult for teachers to find jobs- as each district will have its own standards. This is an unreasonable burden and extremely unprofessional. This is a knock against the teaching profession in CT. Teachers from out of state will not come here, because the licensing burden will be too great. This leads me to my testimony regarding Section 31.

Section 31- Teacher Salaries based on Certification.

Salaries based on certifications that are given by local principals and superintendents are a wrong decision. It is a knock against professional educators. Salaries in other professions are based on

experience, and that is the way that it should remain. Experienced educators are the best assets in the classroom, they are far from the 'dead weight' that is the popular opinion. Contrary to the insulting and ignorant remarks that teachers 'just have to show up' to attain tenure and become experienced, teachers work day in and day out, just as other professions. Experience is an immense asset, experienced teachers are experts in learning styles, different students, in the science and art of teaching. I would rather have an experienced heart surgeon, rather than a new heart surgeon, to operate, even if I have to pay more. If salary is based on local certification, experienced teachers will be fired, because they 'cost more.' Teachers do not just 'show up' every day- teachers deal with complex situations and people every day, making decisions that affect students and their lives, It is a burden that is not taken lightly by any professional educator in the state of CT. Changing the salary structure will draw less than professional teachers, and it will further burden teachers already struggling to get by in a still down economy. Teachers are very much the middle class, this legislation has said it wants to help the struggling middle class, and not engage in 'teacher bashing'. These changes will not help the middle class, it will push teachers into poverty, and this is the most extreme example of teacher bashing, by destroying the professionalism of teachers.

I hope that you do not pass this destructive and deceiving legislation and take into consideration the 40,000 plus teachers in the state of Connecticut, the 40,000 plus residents in the state of CT, and, ultimately the students in the public schools of CT.

Thank you.