

Taylor Miller  
Student, University of Hartford Teacher Preparation Program  
Testimony on Senate Bill 24  
2/21/12

Chairwoman Stillman, Chairman Fleischmann, and members of the Committee,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 24. My name is Taylor Miller, and I am a junior at the University of Hartford, working towards a dual degree in Special/ Elementary Education. I am also a member of Students For Education Reform at my university.

Teaching should be competitive; competition brings out the best. Teaching is a profession that affects the lives of others, specifically children. It is one of the only professions where you automatically receive unconditional trust; trust that you will help build that bridge of opportunity through knowledge. Students in public school deserve great teachers, teachers who are qualified to teach those students who need them the most. Some students in public schools enter the classroom not completely understanding the importance of them being there, teachers have a huge responsibility to work with that student so they understand why.

I am now a candidate for a dual degree in Elementary and Special Education, and it's the amazing teachers I had throughout my life whom I have to thank for this career goal. These teachers solidified my desire and passion to choose the field of teaching. I attended Batchelder Elementary School in Hartford, where I was not challenged academically. After Batchelder, I went to Hartford Middle Magnet School where I was expected to much more studying and school work. While I struggled at first, the high standards of this school and my high school, Capitol Preparatory Magnet School, prepared me for the college education that I am receiving today.

With every class that I've taken in my professional studies program I've made it a priority to work and study hard. I want no less for the students that I will stand before in the classroom. Through continued hard work and maintaining a high level of academic excellence, I've no doubt that I will be able to demonstrate those skill sets in a positive way as encouragement for the children that many families will have entrusted to me. Of course I should get at least a B+ to become a public school teacher. Other professions are competitive, why shouldn't teaching be? That's the kind of improvement that SB 24 brings to the teaching profession. It makes teaching a more competitive profession, geared toward finding the best and bringing them into teaching, then making sure that we teachers continually improve and get professional advancement based on our actual performance in the classroom. That's what teachers in my generation want. We want certification, promotions, tenure, and opportunities based on how well we educate children.

Despite coming from a family that values education and having a mother that was very involved in parent partnerships with Hartford schools, my decision to become a teacher was met with skepticism from my family. Too many people do not respect teaching as a profession despite it being the most important job for our children's future. Raising the standards for becoming a teacher will raise the profession itself and push back against these unfortunate stigmas. SB 24 will turn that around for Connecticut. Please pass this very important bill and put the teaching profession back in the honorable position it should be in. Thank you for your time.