

*Remarks of  
David Telep  
East Haddam School District*

**Before the Education Committee  
On S.B. No. 24, AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS**

**February 21, 2012**

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

My name is David Telep, and I'm a technology teacher in East Haddam. I am here today to comment on Senate Bill 24, Section 30.

Senate Bill 24 uses a new teacher evaluation system to control certification, salaries, and tenure. The scope of this influence begs the question; what should teachers be held accountable for, and how do we effectively measure it?

When General Motors makes a car, are they to be held accountable for how customers use that car or only for the quality of the car itself? When legislators of this General Assembly pass a law, are you held accountable if a citizen fails to follow that law? Hardly. The actions of a drunk driver or of a law breaking citizen are beyond of the control of either GM or the GA and so it is unfair and invalid to measure the quality of a car or a statute on that measure. How is it that teachers are to be held accountable for student achievement when so many factors are outside of our control – socio-economic factors, cultural factors, family history and behavior.

Teachers should be held accountable for creating rich, rigorous learning opportunities for students. We are accountable for differentiating our instruction to meet the individual needs of students. We are accountable for examining data and providing student specific intervention. We are accountable for creating a meaningful and relevant context throughout the learning process. But *students* are ultimately accountable for their own performance and parents of those students share that responsibility.

If value added models (VAM) are destined to be part of teacher evaluation, it is critical that we get it right. According to a study done by the Economic Policy Institute, we get it wrong a lot.

According to the report, the error rates and misidentification of teacher performance using VAM's are as follows:

- ⤴ 10 years of testing data - error rate 12% (1 in 9 teachers misidentified)
- ⤴ 3 years of data - error rate 26% (1 in 4 teachers misidentified)
- ⤴ 1 year of data - error rate 36% (1 in 3 teachers misidentified)<sup>1</sup>

This level of statistical inaccuracy is unacceptable when teachers' salary, tenure, and even certification, our license to teach, is at stake.

The implementation timeline outlined in SB 24 is simply too short to insure a valid, equitable instrument for teacher evaluation. It calls for pilot testing in 2012-13 and full implementation in 2013-14. PEAC has yet to identify or design testing mechanisms for the majority of content teachers, let alone support staff such as the guidance counselors, school psychologists, and library media specialists. To expect these models to be designed, tested, revised, retested, and implemented in 2 years is unrealistic.

SB 24's success or failure rests on an effective teacher evaluation system. We need more time to get this right. I urge the committee to delay the implementation of this bill until the research and development has been done properly.

---

<sup>1</sup>Economic Policy Institute, August 2010, Briefing Paper #278.