

*Remarks of
Angela Simpson
Westport Teacher*

**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 Angela Simpson, and I'm a teacher and mother with children in the Westport public school system.

I wish to express my concern over Senate Bill 24. While I believe many of the objectives in Governor Malloy's bill would be harmful to our children's educations if implemented, this letter focuses primarily on the consequences of altering teacher certification, evaluation and salary advancement requirements.

Weakening the fairness of the process by which a teacher is evaluated, financially compensated, and granted tenure is sure to drive talented potential teaching candidates away from wanting to join the profession, and what job could be more important than training future generations to be successful in our increasingly competitive and global economy? Since teachers already earn lower wages than professionals from other fields that require similar levels of educational training or even less, there is little incentive for professionals to want to become teachers. Without some measure of job security and salary stability, we cannot hope to attract qualified candidates to the teaching profession for future generations. Without rewarding teachers with a stable, adequate income, we can neither hope to draw future teachers into the profession, nor keep some of the experienced, highly-trained ones we already have who may need to change professions to support their own families.

Furthermore, diminishing the level of education and training that a teacher needs to be certified in our state means that the quality of teaching to our children will be compromised. Connecticut's more astringent requirements for teacher certification help assure that only the best candidates work with our students. Allowing less-qualified candidates from other states to acquire certification without gaining the proper training would be a disservice to Connecticut's students. Obtaining a master's degree requires further effort and expense on the part of a Connecticut teacher, but pays off for both the students, who benefit from better-trained teachers, as well as for the teacher, who is rewarded with a salary increase for achieving the milestone.

I urge you to reject Governor Malloy's Senate Bill 24. Establishing new evaluation procedures as described in the bill thereby threatening salary stability, weakening due process for tenure retention, and diminishing certification requirements so that less-qualified individuals are teaching our children would be damaging to the education system, and would take years to repair. Passing the bill affects far more than the livelihood of thousands of teachers, it would have a profound long-term and negative impact on the quality of our children's education.

Thank you.