

*Remarks of Constance Poulin
Special Education Teacher
Vernon Public Schools*

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

February 21, 2012

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

My name is Constance F. Poulin, and I am a special education teacher in the Vernon Public Schools. I am here today to comment on Senate Bill 24, Section 29 (6).

I am in my thirteenth of year teaching. I worked very hard to put myself through college not only to earn my Bachelor of Arts degree but also my Master of Education degree and my teaching certificate. I began my teaching career eagerly and enthusiastically, knowing that I still had many hurdles to jump. In addition to completing the comprehensive BEST Portfolio and meeting state standards for the portfolio, I endured a rigorous evaluation system in order to earn tenure. During my first four years of teaching, I was evaluated three times each year for the entire class period. My primary evaluator observed me twice a year and my secondary evaluator observed me once per year. Not only did I have to complete a pre-evaluation worksheet; I had a post observation meeting with my evaluator to discuss strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement. My primary evaluator was rotated yearly between the school principal and the two vice principals purposely to ensure fair, non-biased results. My secondary evaluator has consistently been the supervisor of special education. This system ensured that all building administrators observed new teachers in order to determine their skills and competencies. I have met all the district and state requirements put in place to be an effective teacher. Clearly, I did not “just show up for four years.” I do not “just show up” now. Vernon Public Schools continues to evaluate me.

The changes proposed in the tenure policy will send the wrong message about becoming educated, reaching goals, and working hard in Connecticut. This will have a far reaching impact on future generations. I would like to strongly urge the committee to consider changing the tenure policy to align with the CEA’s “A View from the Classroom” proposal, in particular streamlining the dismissal process. By making these changes, we will have a balance between attracting and retaining the best teachers, and providing job security and stability for career professionals.

Thank you for your time,

Constance F. Poulin