



Testimony by Ann Anderberg, Ph.D.
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Before the Higher Education and
Employment Advancement Committee
March 13, 2012

Senator Bye, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, I am Dr. Ann Anderberg, Assistant Professor of Elementary Education at Eastern Connecticut State University. I am writing in support of House Bill 5448, *An Act Concerning English Language Learner Educator Programs in Higher Education*.

The plight of English Language Learners in Connecticut schools is a growing concern. The needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) and closing the academic achievement gap are tightly linked with higher education policy, especially as it pertains to teacher training and pre-service teacher preparation programs.

Over my 30+ year career, I have served as a bilingual/TESOL teacher and Priority School District central office administrator. As a graduate of the doctoral program at UConn and currently working as an Assistant Professor in the Education Department of Eastern Connecticut State University, I can assert that a significant contributor to the academic achievement gap for ELLs in Connecticut can be attributed to the inadequate preparation of general education and specialized staff. The chronic shortage areas and lack of qualified minority candidates are indicators of systemic failure to address the needs of a dynamic population with tremendous potential to lead Connecticut in the effort to develop a vibrant, multilingual workforce and cultural landscape.

The ELL Task Force, convened by Representative Susan Johnson, is conducting extensive information gathering from all stakeholders and will provide a series of recommendations as a result of this process.

As a Connecticut State University faculty member, I share with my bilingual colleagues in the field a belief that we need to build sustainable pathways to both teacher certification and credentialing that will link, in meaningful ways, PreK-12, Alternate Route Programs and existing teacher preparation programs. The four overarching goals that I will be advocating the Task Force's recommendations to address are:

- Strategies to eliminate the shortage areas in Bilingual and TESOL cross-endorsement areas, particularly through articulation agreements with the community colleges and the Alternate Route to Certification for Teachers of English Language Learners (ARCTELL)

- Requirements to improve the instructional repertoires of all teachers with respect of the needs of ELLs, particularly through strengthened requirements for course work in second language acquisition, theory and applied practice
- Development and enhancement of incentives (including IHE tuition support) for the most challenging positions in Priority School Districts
- Development of clear pathways for minority candidates and native language speakers to attain teaching certification and credentials to support evidence-based instruction of ELLs (both Spanish speakers and low-incidence languages).

If you have any questions, please contact Jill E. Ferraiolo, Director of Government Relations, Board of Regents for Higher Education, at 860-493-0017.