

**Remarks of Sharon Huynh  
Fourth Grade Teacher  
Weston Public Schools**

**Before the Education Committee  
On S.B. No. 24, AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS  
Section 28, Teacher Certification**

**February 21, 2012**

Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee: My name is Sharon Huynh, and I'm a fourth grade teacher in Weston, commenting on Senate Bill 24, Section 28.

It is my understanding that this Bill restructures the teacher certification requirements so that earning a Master's Degree is no longer necessary for all teachers. I believe these proposed changes belittle the teaching profession by presenting teachers as professionals who do not need to be highly educated. It shows a lack of respect for the training teachers go through, as if it is unnecessary and anyone can be a teacher.

Ever since I was in second grade, I have wanted to be a teacher. I remember making mental notes of things my favorite teacher did with my fourth grade class so I could use it in my own classroom someday. Although I was accepted to numerous colleges, I chose to attend the University of Connecticut because it had a top-ranked School of Education with a Integrated Bachelors-Masters Program that included multiple, diverse teaching experiences in various schools. My Masters Degree was achieved after a year of teaching, coordinating with a team of teachers, exposing a predominately Caucasian student population to the Chinese culture, revising curriculum, researching, and reflecting on my work. Upon graduation in 2001 with my Masters Degree in Education, I was offered a job in Weston because they understood that graduates of UConn's School of Education were highly prepared to teach.

Teachers are professionals. We are smart individuals who are trained to teach children. We are not slackers. We constantly strive to do our best so that it impacts our students positively. While we could hold other professions, we choose teaching. We did not enter the profession lightly because we understand the important responsibility we hold. By demanding less of teachers, as is proposed in the form of fewer education requirements for certification, you are saying that it is OK for teachers to be mediocre.

Education begins in the classroom, where we teachers are trying to make a difference in the lives of our students. I would strongly urge the committee to maintain the current certification requirements for teachers—that *all* teachers need a Master's Degree to receive a Professional Certificate. How can we expect our students to do their best and reach their potential if we don't expect the same of our teachers? Teachers need to be armed with the best training in order to help their students become their best.