

C A A C E

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

February 15, 2012

Testimony on the following bills:

Raised Bill 5028: AN ACT CONCERNING THE ALIGNMENT OF COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS WITH COLLEGE CURRICULUM

Raised Bill 40: AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN ACCESS TO COLLEGE LEVEL COURSES

Submitted by: David Downes, Vice President, Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education and Director of Adult and Continuing Education for the West Hartford Public Schools

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education, a statewide professional organization representing provider of mandated adult education.

Representative Willis, Senator Bye and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

All three of the bills before this committee today speak to the issue of college readiness, an issue that adult education programs contend with regularly as we serve almost 4,000 adult students yearly who attain a high school diploma credential, plus over 10,000 more students annually who are in the process of earning a diploma. As Vice President of the Connecticut Association of Adult and Continuing Education, I would like to speak briefly in favor of raised bills SB 40 and HB 5028.

Raised bill 5028 would ensure a dialog between those at the secondary level, who will be implementing the recently revised Common Core State Standards, and those higher education institutions that receive many of their students. While the new Common Core Standards were developed explicitly to ensure postsecondary academic readiness, it would be wise to directly involve our higher education institutions in the implementation of those standards so as to promote the communication that is often lacking, throughout the state, between colleges and secondary schools. We in adult education are in similar discussions in aligning the content standards of our instruction with the common core at all grade levels, and particularly with the secondary standards as the GED test is being realigned with these same core standards. All three of our secondary education completion programs are necessarily affected by the adoption of the new common core standards, and adult education programs would also benefit from the communication with those in higher education that this bill proposes.

Raised bill 40 would directly and positively affect our adult education secondary graduates who too often cannot access credit-bearing college courses without spending

semesters of time and money on non-credit bearing, remedial courses at the college after enrollment. Often the sole determining factor in the decision requiring students to take remedial courses is the “gatekeeper” Accuplacer test, an online, computer administered assessment that has a reputation of not providing adequate feedback on what specific skills students need to develop. While the resources of state postsecondary schools are stretched thin with the high demand for admissions, this gatekeeper system is too arbitrary and too frustrating for many students to persist toward better education and a brighter future.

This bill proposes a system of tandem support for students in need *while they are in* entry level, credit-bearing college courses, which would allow students to begin their college program in an interest area that can better motivate them to persist and complete a full program of study. Such a system would also allow students to conserve Pell Grant funds and other financial aid for credit-bearing course work so that money is less likely to run out before a program can be completed.