In regards to Proposed Senate Bill 309, *which asks that a Connecticut teacher be permitted to purchase retirement credit in said system for teaching service at the American International Schools overseas under the Department of State.*

March 22, 2013

I want to acknowledge the efforts of Senator Doyle, Senator Fonfara and Representative Morin who sponsored this bill after I contacted them with this issue. And I want to thank this assembly for giving me the opportunity to speak regarding the bill. As an elementary school teacher, I am especially excited to be here and actually be part of the democratic system that I teach in the classroom. I would be remiss if I didn't give a wave to my class of third graders who are keenly watching this process.

I am here to talk about Proposed Senate Bill 309, which asks that a Connecticut teacher be permitted to purchase retirement credit in said system for teaching service at the American International Schools overseas under the Department of State.

I wish to buy years back towards retirement for 13 years I taught overseas at Department of State schools. I am a Connecticut certified teacher and a graduate of both Connecticut College and the University Of Connecticut. I taught in Somers for eleven years, before my ex-husband accepted a job with the United States Foreign Service, part of the Department of State, in 1989. We took our family overseas and served our country proudly in a diplomatic capacity. As a certified teacher I was eagerly welcomed by the American International Schools established by the State Department to provide embassy families with a status quo education, comparable to the education they would receive at home in the United States. These schools were funded in part by grants from the State Department, and the American Ambassador usually served as the chairman of the school board.

I taught overseas for thirteen years as part of the American diplomatic community. I taught an American curriculum, and maintained my Connecticut certificate with in-service and course work. Our school populations were diverse. Many were the children of Americans

teaching service at American International Schools, funded by the Department of State. I would like to buy back some of the years of my overseas service, but there is no provision for this in the state regulations.

I am respectfully asking that you review this policy to determine why a diplomatic assignment, like a military assignment, is not eligible for the buyback option. I hold our military and especially the families who support them in the highest regard, but I also know diplomatic families serve our country in postings far away from home with similar challenges.

When we accepted our first posting with the State Department, we were assured during the mandatory orientation for families, that the State Department had created and continued to fund its schools overseas to guarantee an equivalent educational experience for embassy and consulate dependents, and that instruction would meet the same rigorous standards required stateside. As an American teacher trained in an US college and credentialed by the state of Connecticut, I was part of that equivalent educational experience. My service overseas, with the opportunities and responsibilities to represent America both in the classroom and in the greater community, was important to the many hundreds of students and their families I had the pleasure of working with.

I believe that I should, just as my military counterparts, be able to count the years I taught overseas towards retirement.

I hope you will consider the passage of this bill and allow me to purchase some of those years.

Thank you for your attention.

Patricia M. Marks

CHAPTER 167a* TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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Address http://www.cga.ct.gov/2009/pub/Chap167a.htm#Sec10-183e.htm

Sec. 10-183e. Credited service. (a) A member shall receive a month of credited service for each month of service as a teacher, provided the Teachers' Retirement Board may grant a member a month of credited service for a month during which such member was employed after the first school day but not later than the fifth school day of such month if (1) such month was the member's first month of service as a teacher and (2) such month of credited service is needed by the member in order to qualify for a normal retirement benefit. Ten months of credited service shall be equal to one year of credited service. A member may not accumulate more than one year of credited service during any school year.

(b) Any member may purchase, as provided in subsection (c) of this section, additional credited service, but not to exceed an aggregate of one year in the case of service described in subdivision (2) of this subsection for each two years of active full-time service as a Connecticut teacher; and not to exceed an aggregate of one year in the case of absence described in subdivision (8) of this subsection for each five years of active full-time service as a Connecticut teacher, provided if any such absence exceeds thirty consecutive school months, such additional credited service shall be limited to thirty school months; and not to exceed an aggregate of ten years for all service described in this subsection, except for service described in subdivision (2) of this subsection. In no event may any service described in this subsection be purchased if the member is receiving or is, or will become, entitled to receive a retirement benefit based upon such service from any governmental system other than the teachers' retirement system or the federal Social Security System. Additional credited service includes:

(1) Service as a teacher in a school for military dependents established by the United States Department of Defense;

(2) Service as a teacher in another state of the United States, its territories or possessions;

(3) Service in the armed forces of the United States in time of war, as defined in section 27-103, or service in said armed forces during the period beginning October 27, 1953, and ending January 31, 1955;

(4) Service in a permanent full-time position for the state;

(5) Service as a teacher at The University of Connecticut prior to July 1, 1965;

(6) Service as a teacher at the Wheeler School and Library, North Stonington, prior to September 1, 1949;

(7) Service as a teacher at the Gilbert Home, Winsted, prior to September 1, 1948;

(8) Any formal leave of absence as provided in regulations adopted by the board, if the member subsequently returns to service for at least one school year;

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