

I'm writing to request that the education committee oppose Section 22 of HB6357, which adds the healthy foods initiative to the Community Investment Act, effectively reducing the budget for other CIA-funded programs. While the healthy foods initiative addresses an important issue, this should be funded through the Department of Education and other public health funds. If there are not sufficient funds available, there are many areas of public spending that have little beneficial impact on the health and well-being of our communities.

Specifically, I would like to suggest that the state consider the wastefulness of its employment practices, including holidays and benefits afforded to state employees that are not available almost anywhere in the private sector. For example, Lincoln's birthday is observed as a state holiday, which not only adds to the public burden of paying salaries for an extraneous holiday, it reduces the productivity of all state agencies. Further, salaries of state employees in many fields are far above those offered for comparable positions in the private sector. It seems unconscionable that funding that is intended to improve the economy and quality of life of Connecticut communities would be diverted for a program that could be easily funded by reducing wasteful spending at the taxpayers' expense.

Sincerely,

Lori Blinderman
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