

## TESTIMONY OF ALLAN B. TAYLOR IN OPPOSITION TO BILL NO. 5078

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Committee, I am Allan Taylor, chair of the State Board of Education. I am here, at the direction and with the strong support of my colleagues on the State Board, to speak in opposition to Bill No. 5078. I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

The members of the State Board of Education oppose any delay in implementing the Common Core for one simple reason: delay will harm Connecticut's students. As a practical matter, delay will hurt our students because both the SAT and the ACT are focusing on college readiness, using the same rubrics and understandings that inform the Common Core. Whether or not we stay with the Common Core, and whether or not we prepare our students to those standards, their academic readiness will be measured against the Common Core's goals.

More fundamentally, delaying the Common Core means continuing with the English Language Arts and Math standards in effect before we adopted the Common Core. The problem with that is that the Common Core standards, which we adopted 4 years ago after almost a year of publicly noticed study while the standards went from rough draft to final product, are far superior to the standards that Connecticut had written for itself. At your workshop last week, you heard Dr. Gillis tell you that the prior Connecticut ELA standards were poorly done. She is right. Those standards deserved the scorn they received from the Fordham Foundation. And it's not only the Fordham Foundation that didn't like those standards; neither did the American Federation of Teachers. Our Math standards, while comprehensible and therefore superior to the ELA standards, were also deemed not strong by the AFT and given a D by Fordham. With all respect, it makes no sense to return to the mediocrity of our prior standards by delaying implementation of the Common Core.

Why are the Common Core standards better? They are structured to build operational comfort with and conceptual mastery of foundational concepts and skills, so that students can apply what they have learned to new situations. They aim at transferrable knowledge, not merely the ability to recall and regurgitate, and so they require and allow our students to experience the pleasure of diving deeply into new knowledge. By recognizing that true literacy depends on broad background knowledge and emphasizing the promotion of literacy skills across the curriculum, they push back against the narrowing of the curriculum that has been one of the worst aspects of the last decade in education.

There is much more to say, but I am out of time. My colleagues and I are convinced that as we move through the transition, the results will be more deeply engaged students who are better prepared to meet their futures, and schools that are more rewarding and more enjoyable for students and teachers alike. But we can't get through the transition if we turn around now because there are hills in the road. Please, don't make Connecticut go backwards.