

Testimony for Public Hearing  
Education Committee  
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Committee Bill No. 5078

Good Afternoon,

As an educator in the state of Connecticut, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts about *Committee Bill No 5078: An Act Imposing a Moratorium on the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards*. This impacts me in my role as a Language Arts Consultant, and as a parent of a child who will begin kindergarten in the 2014-2015 school year. I urge you to consider the implications of this proposed bill on the students in Connecticut's public schools, as well as the educators serving those students.

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers published the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010. Connecticut adopted the standards put forth for English Language Arts and Mathematics, effective July seventh of that same year. Connecticut then developed a strategic plan for implementation, which it shared with school districts in December of 2012. Based on the timeline provided in that strategic plan, school districts in Connecticut should be fully implementing the standards this year.

In order to prepare for implementation, districts have dedicated time and resources to developing or purchasing curricula and materials that align with the CCSS. As with any new initiative, during this transition period challenges have arisen. Yes classroom teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators have concerns about the implementation of

the CCSS. Yes educators are overwhelmed by the vast shifts in the landscape of education. No, that does not mean that it was wrong to try to implement the CCSS.

The writers of the CCSS used recent research in what it means for students to be prepared for college and careers. They also investigated the standards of other countries to allow students to compete in a global society. The writers looked at standards currently in place in states where students have been successful. The standards themselves have not been the source of controversy among educators. Of course they are untested and perhaps some minor changes will need to be made to some of the language as implementation moves forward. Revision is a natural part of the process of any kind of writing. However, the CCSS are well researched and push students toward deeper learning than past standards. They expect more from students, based on what the research shows students should know and be able to do when they exit high school.

The statement of purpose for proposed the proposed bill is, "To delay the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in the state." The language "delay" implies that in the state of Connecticut, we would eventually continue implementation. Yet, the bill requires schools to revert to the standards formerly in place and administer the Connecticut Mastery Test. It also stops funds appropriated for CCSS implementation from being distributed for the rest of this school year as well as the 2014-2015 school year. In the middle of a school year, with implementation plans in place, school districts do not have the luxury of simply hitting the breaks. The bill calls for a study to be conducted to investigate the impact of CCSS implementation and the effect of Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium testing. It requires the Department of Education to submit a

report on or before January 1, 2015. No language is included on when and how a decision will be made about moving forward.

According to the state's strategic plan for implementation of the CCSS, during the 2013-2014 school year, school districts should be in full implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Full implementation did not occur quickly or without consideration for the best methods for teaching the standards. Since the CCSS do not tell *how* to teach the standards, districts have researched evidence-based instructional practices and developed or purchased curricula that would address the standards in an effective way. They have dedicated time and resources to professional development related to effective ways to teach the standards. Consider the impact of this bill on teaching and learning; everything will change again, but this time, immediately. It will confuse students and frustrate teachers even more to pause implementation of the CCSS at this point in time.

This bill was proposed in response to complaints from educators, parents, students, and lawmakers about CCSS implementation. The question that should be posed here is not whether the CCSS are appropriate. What really needs to be uncovered is the root of the problem. Too many changes have hit educators at once, causing teachers to be overwhelmed. The amount of sudden change that this bill will create is sure to produce the opposite impact from what is intended.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jillian Fountain