

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I'm Patrice Thibodeau, and I've come here today to speak on an issue that hasn't been fully addressed in regards to the conversation of Common Core standards, but is at the center of the opposition towards Common Core standards, which is uniformity. While I agree with the majority of what is addressed in Committee Bill 5078, and if passed believe the results of the reports will come back conclusively supporting those who point out the flaws in Common Core standards, I wanted to contribute why those results will possible come back supporting those against it, and provide solutions. My concern with Common Core standards is it tries to teach academic material in a uniform fashion, as if everyone will process and retain the information in the same way. But, the reality is this couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, I myself suffered from a condition known as convergence insufficiency, which greatly reduced my ability to retain information, since my eyes would bounce involuntarily around the pages, text would become blurry, and eye strain would lead ultimately to stress, and a sense of failure.

Once, I went to a Behavioral Optometrist, and used special technology designed to retrain my eyes towards binocular vision, hope became a possibility. I'm not paid by Behavioral Optometrists, and I'm speaking on my own experiences and what has helped me, but symptoms of children that may be classified as dyslexic, experience symptoms of ADHD, and as well as others symptoms, may find out after testing to have eye teaming problems, convergence insufficiency or other astigmatism of the eyes, and may experience relief after seeing a Behavioral Optometrist.

Now don't get me wrong, Behavioral Optometry isn't the end all approach, and won't help every student suffering similar symptoms preventing them from excelling in their academic pursuits, and doesn't mean that every child that experiences certain symptoms has a problem

with their eyes and once that's solved – problem solved; but, it makes the point that a uniform, one way approach won't improve scores, and overall academic performance, if everyone isn't the same.

The good news is testing during early childhood development could prevent hundreds of thousands of children from suffering and being destined to frustration with not only reading, but school work in general. States like the Commonwealth of Virginia, now test children during early childhood development to prevent children from suffering from the multiple eye problems which may be solved with Behavioral Optometry. Even, in a recent interview on A Better Connecticut, Dr. Juanita Collier spoke about the benefits of Vision Therapy, and on her website shows the progression of the success of Michelle, a 4th grade teacher's son Ethan, who dramatically improved his academic performance after going to Vision Therapy. Even for those who may be concerned about affordability, and for those families who currently can't afford this service or treatment, - how can even we discuss reasonable policy, such as possibly amending and adding Vision Therapy services to the HUSKY program, if we don't test currently, and don't identify those who may currently be experiencing symptoms by testing near vision, when currently most only test long-distance vision, which may verify the child to have 20/20 vision long-distance. Why is this important, because near vision is crucial for academic work. No child – no child, should be robbed of an education because they are different. If it takes one student 60 steps to complete long term division, and another uses less steps, but they both get the right answer, why would we penalize individuality – which a uniform system refuses to accept.

Even our Governor, Dan Malloy, struggled with schoolwork, but with technology and resources was able to preserve, go to law school, and accomplish much more - but that wasn't because of a uniform system. And just because I'm here today, and Just because I've

persevered, as our governor has, to pursue and excel in my academic endeavors, doesn't mean I came here to speak as a platform to become governor (though there is one member of this committee I would support for governor in 2018, but if you asked me who it was I would plead the fifth amendment), but all jokes aside, it's because I'm concerned we're not addressing the individuality of students, their challenges, and their gifts.

And I'll just close with this Mr. Chairman, I wish this was a laughing matter, and I wish this wasn't as serious as it is, I wish we didn't refuse to accept and implement solutions to a significant amount of children who may have their entire academic trajectory altered, and destined to frustration and remedial work, but our current path seems to guarantee this.

And, I hope the committee would look into what other States are doing in regards to testing for eye problems such as convergence insufficiency, in addition to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of Common Core standards.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. & Members of the Committee,

Patrice Thibodeau