To: State of Connecticut Education Committee Member/State Representative

From: Brian Gosper, Killingly Town Council

Date: 3/11/14

Re: Public Hearing - Wednesday, March 12
12:00 PM in Room 1E - Legislative Office Building.

H.B. No. 5078 AN ACT IMPOSING A MORATORIUM ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS. (*which would delay the implementation of the common core state standards and the smarter balance test for a year.)

H.B. No. 5331 AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISIONS TO THE PEAC GUIDELINES. (*which would delay the smarter balanced test scores from being part of the teacher evaluations)

Dear State Representative,

I would like to express my concerns regarding HB No. 5078 and HB 5331 in writing. I am greatly disturbed that the reforms being implemented in the State of Connecticut, which mirror those taking place in the country, are misguided and serve as a one-size-fits-all process with serious flaws:

• I am concerned that the entire process of adopting these reforms has been undertaken in a manner that removed all public input, and effectively removes a great deal of local control from schools, thus impacting my ability to direct my children's education.

• I am concerned that the new Common Core State Standards in both Math and ELA have received many criticisms about their developmental appropriateness and usage, and feel that both parents and teachers should be given the opportunity to understand them fully, and provide feedback on how their use is impacting my children.

• I am concerned that the State of Connecticut has developed a P20 database called the "Preschool through 20 Workforce Information Network" which was funded through the federal government, under the ARRA. I understand this will hold personal data including educational records and assessment data, and other data collected and shared across various state agencies, on our children from pre-school through college. This is especially disconcerting because the federal law (FERPA) to protect their personally identifiable information has been changed to allow sharing with outside organizations of personal information on my children.

• I am concerned that the Connecticut State Department of Education is using my children this year as "guinea pigs" to help validate a product called the Smarter Balanced Assessment without my fully-informed consent, and insinuating that it is legally required, instead of giving a yearly assessment (like the CMT) of their learning as required by state statute.

• I am concerned that the State Department of Education is not only asking our children to validate the SBAC, it is also adding an 11th grade assessment during the most difficult year in high school, which is often filled with other standardized tests and college preparation activities.

• I am concerned that my child's teacher will at some future point be evaluated in great part based on the result of an entirely new and untested type of assessment. And as research shows, it could be detrimental to both students and teachers to tie a teacher evaluation to a standardized test score, and this practice should be eliminated altogether.

As a parent, I strongly believe we must return to having autonomous and local control with regards to our school system, so that parents can continue to direct the education of our children, and schools continue to reflect local community needs.

And as a member of the Killingly Town Council I intend to OPPOSE Common Core locally through every mean at my disposal including voting AGAINST any of our local Board of Education's attempt to expand and fund this disaster.

Thank you for your consideration.

Brian R. Gosper
Killingly Town Council
District 4

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