



Advocating for teachers
and public education

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**Written Testimony of Vincent J. Loffredo
Director, CEA Government and Political Relations
Wednesday, March 12, 2014
Education Committee**

RE: S.B. No. 424 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN IN THE CARE AND CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. (ED)

H.B. No. 5520 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE AVAILABILITY OF AN ON-LINE STUDY SKILLS CURRICULUM. (ED)

H.B. No. 5522 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL READINESS FUNDING. (ED)

H.B. No. 5523 (RAISED) AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY PARAPROFESSIONAL STAFFING LEVELS. (ED)

CEA supports S.B. 424 with full state funding. The research strongly supports access to preschool. It is very important that children have access to high-quality preschool. Children who are under the care and custody of the Department of Children and Families should have access to preschool. However, the cost of this placement should be provided by the state. This cost should NOT be placed on local boards of education. They're being currently underfunded by the state through its failure to full fund the Education Cost Sharing Grant by over \$700,000,000.

CEA supports H.B. 5520. Over many decades the State Board of Education has made available curriculum materials and other materials to assist boards of education in developing instructional programs on a variety of topics including the Holocaust and genocide; the Great Famine in Ireland; African-American, Puerto Rican and Native American history and other topics. This bill would provide an additional curriculum that provides on-line coursework in remedial instruction for students.

CEA supports H.B. 5522. Investing in quality preschool/school readiness programs is vital to the well-being of our children. Investing in high-quality statewide and properly funded early- childhood education will bring future economic, social, and fiscal returns that outweigh the costs. It will greatly aid in closing Connecticut's achievement gap. Also, the rate of reimbursement for this program is overdue for an increase. The current rate has not changed since June of 2009.

CEA supports H.B. 5523. We believe that paraprofessionals are an integral part of the education community and that they provide invaluable service students and staff. We believe that the work of this proposed task force will help to clarify and enhance the role that they play in the education and support of our children.

We urge your support of these bills.

Thank you.