



Testimony submitted to the Education Committee for March 17, 2014

**H.B. No. 5559: (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A UNIFORM REGIONAL SCHOOL CALENDAR**

My name is Paula Colen and I am the Executive Director of EASTCONN, the Regional Education Service Center (RESC) serving thirty six (36) school districts in Northeastern Connecticut. I was also a member of the Regional School Calendar Task Force.

I am submitting written testimony in support of H.B. No. 5559 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A UNIFORM REGIONAL SCHOOL CALENDAR. This bill supports the adoption of the Regional School Calendar Task Force's recommendations to allow the RESCs to continue their work in coordinating the development and implementation of a regional calendar. Delaying the mandated year of implementation to 2016-2017 will allow districts time to modify any existing contractual language which might impede successful implementation. I urge the committee to support the delay as outlined in H.B. No. 5559 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A UNIFORM REGIONAL SCHOOL CALENDAR.

Based upon EASTCONN's experience working with our region to develop a regional calendar over the past few years, I encourage and ask you to consider adopting the other recommendations of the Task Force. Our region, on a voluntary basis, has developed a suggested regional calendar for the past few years and has identified some items that increase the likelihood of successful adoption of a regional calendar by our districts. These key flexibility options are also reflected in the Task Force's recommendations. The implementation of this flexibility in our calendar has resulted in increased opportunities for regional collaboration in areas such as Professional Development and Transportation.

The recommendation of the Task Force that I would urge you to support include the following:

Allow for individual district flexibility of up to five (5) days within a regional calendar since:

- Cultural and religious observations drive individual town calendars based on community need,
- An individual school district may have unanticipated circumstances such as construction delays, serious maintenance issues, and student assessment windows.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. I am available to discuss this further should you have questions or need further information.

Thank you for all you do for Connecticut students.