

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing in support of HB 5078, a bill seeking to delay implementation of Common Core's standards and HB 5331, a bill to revise guidelines for teacher evaluations.

It's difficult to summarize the many grave concerns I have about Common Core, the Smarter Balanced test, and the new teacher evaluation system. Several states (Kentucky and New York most notably) opted to implement the common core standards prior to Connecticut and many other states.

Mr. Chairman, a nation is hearing the cries of these students, parents and educators. Why isn't the Connecticut legislature? New York's own governor has conceded that this educational reform movement is not only not working, but is actually hurting the children and education system in New York.

Kentucky has withdrawn itself from PARCC and they are not alone:

States that have withdrawn from PARCC:

Kentucky
Georgia
Florida
Oklahoma

States that have withdrawn from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC):

Kansas
Alaska

***Almost every Common Core state has legislation pending or proposed to halt, delay, evaluate, de-fund or oust the Common Core, the testing and linked teacher evaluation system.**

***Indiana has pulled out completely**

It is well known now that parents and educators were not a part of the development of the Common Core Standards or the complex web which links them to excessive testing and teacher evaluations. We know this from those who witnessed the "closed-door" approach taken by the creators ~ actual education experts like Sandra Stotsky set to testify tomorrow.

Enough time has elapsed that parents and educators have been able to connect and gather information about the creation of the standards, the lack of qualified professionals, the egregious conflicts of interest with those involved in its inception and those who stand most to gain financially. All one needs to do is Google, "Gates Foundation," "Common Core" or "David Coleman" to learn just how incestuous this whole process has been.

Mr. Chairman, way too information, actual documented evidence and first hand accounts exist for you to look your constituents in the eye and pretend that you believe that this is the right path for Connecticut children.

~States were not a part of developing the standards or this convoluted system. The CEA stated that no Connecticut teacher was involved in this process.

~No teachers or early childhood educators were involved in developing these standards.

~The K-3 standards are developmentally inappropriate.

~The standards were never "Internationally Benchmarked." No study exists.

~The standards were developed almost exclusively by the large test companies (ACT, SAT), Student Achievement Partners (Gates Foundation) and several private Washington organizations, the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governor's Association. Not Connecticut.

~Research and surveys presented to parents and the public as proof that our educators support Common Core was bought and paid for by those who stand to gain most financially.

~No valid research of any kind can be presented to parents and educators to prove that these standards or tests will make any child "College Ready." In fact, research points to the opposite.

~No provisions exist for children with special needs or learning disabilities. Children are viewed as "widgets" who develop at the same rate and learn in the same (Coleman) style.

I know in my heart that you need no more additional research, testimonials or evidence beyond what already exists. In fact, you didn't even need this letter. Your decision to continue down the "Common Core Path" is not due to a lack of information or because an anecdote sad enough has not come across your desk yet. This reform is driven by money and politics. My husband and I know that after tomorrow, you will either be the educational hero that Connecticut so badly needs or another politician selling out the futures of our children and teachers for your career. Very simple.

Laurel Barrett
Wethersfield, CT

PS ~ I have always voted Democrat, but I will vote Republican for the first time if that's the party committed to my daughter's education.