Testimony of Lisa Bress, Head Teacher Windsor Public Schools
Re: HB 5078 An Act Imposing a Moratorium on the Implementation of the Common Core Standards
RE: HB 5331 An Act Concerning the Implementation of the Revisions to the PEAC Guidelines
Education Committee
March 12, 2014

My name is Lisa Bress and I am an educator with 30 plus years of teaching. I hold certifications in Special Ed, Elementary Ed and School Administration. I began my career as a Special Ed teacher in New York City and will end it this June in Windsor CT where I've served as a third grade teacher and Teacher Leader for the last 22 years. Part of my responsibility and joy as an instructional leader has been to guide teachers through the adoption of new standards based curriculums while assisting them in enhancing their teaching practices.

Several years ago, when the new elementary science standards were being piloted, I was fortunate enough to be given a chance to craft a plan, with the blessing of my Superintendent, to prepare our district for the change. It began with educating teachers on the new standards and performance expectations for students. Next a committee of teacher volunteers was created to do extensive work writing curriculum. We then piloted the curriculum along with new hands-on science kits. We added non-fiction books in order to support instruction and integrate literacy at all grade levels. Ongoing systemic professional development was delivered every year. Partnerships were forged with outside science agencies and cultural institutions through grants. Administrators were informed about the standards and asked to provide support. Teacher volunteers collaborated at the state level to create and vet benchmark assessments. All stakeholders, including the Board of Education, were kept up to date on the progress. Parents were involved in science outreach events and information sharing every step of the way.

This was a 5-year endeavor. Our children benefitted and our science performance for ***all*** subgroups reflected our focused and collective efforts. Our teachers when, surveyed, expressed, a newfound confidence teaching lessons aligned to the new standards and felt assured that they, and their students, could achieve their goals.

I share this because I want you to know, from an educator's perspective, what steps are essential in order to "get it right" and successfully implement new standards. ***I urge you to impose a moratorium on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.*** Stakeholder involvement and time to learn and implement the standards properly, has not materialized. In addition, we are struggling under the weight of a new and complex teacher evaluation system that does little, in its present form, to support the vital work teachers need to accomplish for our children. Adopting the revisions to the PEAC Guidelines would be a positive step forward. Help our state slow down and encourage all districts to "get it right" for the sake of our students.