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H.B. 5522, AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL READINESS FUNDING
Education Committee
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Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is John Cattelan and I am here today on behalf of the Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs. The Alliance represents 23 YMCAs across the state of Connecticut.

I'm here today to offer the Alliance's support for H.B. 5522, An Act Concerning School Readiness Funding.

First of all, the school readiness funding has not increased for 6 years; the last increase was the 2008-2009 grant cycle. Obviously the cost of running this program has increased significantly during that same time.

Secondly, by 2015 fifty percent of classroom teachers will need a Bachelor's Degree and by 2020 one hundred percent of our teachers will. While terrific for program quality, this will result in the need for higher wages to attract and keep qualified staff.

Finally, in order to maintain School Readiness certification, our YMCAs must maintain staffing ratios at certain levels. If you combine that with increased cost of everything else, many of our YMCAs have reached the tipping point. Our YMCAs are now considering withdrawing from the program because they can no longer afford to participate in the program. This would be an unfortunate circumstance that all of Connecticut's YMCAs would like to avoid.