



Testimony of

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Education Committee Hearing

February 25, 2015

SB 963 AN ACT CONCERNING A LABOR AND FREE MARKET CAPITALISM CURRICULUM

HB 6836 AN ACT CONCERNING THE TIMING OF CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Good afternoon, Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Stephen McKeever. I am the First Vice President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse state federation of more than 90 local unions representing nearly 30,000 public and private sector employees. Our members include more than 15,000 teachers, paraprofessionals, school nurses, and other school personnel across the state. It is on their behalf that I appear before you to testify on two bills.

SB 963 An Act Concerning a Labor and Free Market Capitalism Curriculum

I am here today to speak in support of SB 963, An Act Concerning a Labor and Free Market Capitalism Curriculum. The labor movement has played a crucial role in the development and improvement of American society and economy. The labor movement has been instrumental in developing the middle class. It has advocated for fair working wages and pensions to allow people to retire with dignity. It brought us the forty-hour work week, workplace safety, and grievance procedures, just to name a few. These did not come without cost; people risked their jobs, jail time, and sometimes their lives to bring about change. We teach our children how our society progressed from an agricultural society to an industrial society, but too often textbooks focus on industry and its role in the economy while limiting discussion of the working people who struggled to bring about the middle class. SB 963 requires that labor history and the struggles of organized labor be taught with equal emphasis on free market capitalism and entrepreneurialism.

HB 6836 An Act Concerning the Timing of Criminal History Records for School Employees

This bill reduces the time required for reporting a background check from thirty days to five days. I am concerned that this is not enough time to do a thorough background check, leading to an inaccuracy in data reported. I am concerned that some instances

may be inadvertently overlooked that would otherwise keep an individual from working in a public school. At the same time, I am also concerned that a rush to review the backgrounds may red flag a case that would otherwise be investigated and determined to be inconsequential.

I support background checks and believe they are necessary to ensure the safety of our children in our schools. I would ask that the timeframe required to perform a background check be increased to a reasonable period to ensure a thorough investigation.