Testimony Raised Bill 7016:
An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the MORE Commission Special Education Working Group

Submitted by: The RESC Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers (Executive Directors: Tom Danehy, ACES; Evan Pitkoff, CES; Bruce Douglas, CREC; Danuta Thibodeau, Education Connection; Paula Colen, EASTCONN; Eileen Howley, LEARN)
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Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee, on behalf of the RESC Alliance, the alliance of all six regional service centers throughout CT, this testimony is in support of Raised Bill 7016, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the MORE Commission Special Education Working Group.

The RESC Alliance is appreciative of the hard work of the MORE Commission and its Special Education Select Working Group for their efforts to address the systemic challenges to serving special education students and to recommend possible solutions through this legislative agenda. The RESC Alliance appreciates and values the vision of strengthening and creating regional solutions to our State’s special education needs. We are committed to providing the highest quality services in the best interests of the children and families that we serve. We appreciate that the MORE Commission and its Special Education Select Working Group recognizes that the six regional educational service centers across CT provide collaborative services to school districts that maximize quality while containing costs and realizing regional efficiencies.

The RESC Alliance affirms the importance of providing high quality services to best meet student needs. Our RESC Alliance Special Education Team has provided a comprehensive articulation of the range of services that our RESC’s currently provide and/or can expand services within, based on district needs (both direct services, center-based and embedded services as well as consultative services). We stand ready to further elaborate on those services and their delivery mechanisms and to articulate regional solutions.

The RESC Alliance recommends that the legislature consider as a first step having RESC’s assist in appropriate data collection from local school districts to assist in determining if services are best provided within a school district or in a regional setting. The RESC Alliance has the capacity to define and deliver such data collection processes to determine areas of greatest need and recommendations for program delivery; we stand ready to prepare and tailor a process to inform regional planning.

Regional service delivery is what we do best. The RESC Alliance has many recommendations regarding how to increase and improve the regional delivery of special education services. We stand ready to support the MORE Commission recommendations and are ready to come to the table to work on regional solutions. This is the work that the RESC’s were created to do. We look forward to working with the MORE Commission, the Connecticut General Assembly, and the CT State Department of Education to discuss, develop and implement these recommendations.