



TESTIMONY OF THE
CONNECTICUT PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)
BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE'S EDUCATION COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2015

RE: SB 1058 AAC CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

HB 6974 AA IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
ACHIEVEMENT GAP TASK FORCE CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A
DIRECTOR OF READING INITIATIVES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION.

SB 1060 AAC THE USE OF RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION IN SCHOOLS.

HB 6975 AA ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY LIFE-
THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES IN SCHOOL.

Good Afternoon. My name is Don Romoser. I am the President of the Connecticut Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and its over 44,000 members and want to testify in support of the following bills:

SB 1058 AAC CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM.

Students who aren't in school aren't learning what they need to be productive and successful adults. Our education system is based on the assumption that students attend school regularly. Any effort to identify and aid students who are not in school benefits not only the student, but our society as a whole. Additionally, developing a chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan would be of benefit to all of our school districts.

**HB 6974 AA IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
ACHIEVEMENT GAP TASK FORCE CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A
DIRECTOR OF READING INITIATIVES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION.**

There is no question that reading is the cornerstone upon which all other learning is built. Having a dedicated individual at the Connecticut Department of Education to support, coordinate and initiate reading programs and professional development makes good sense. One of PTA's founding principles is its dedication to engaging parents in the education of their children. Having a central resource to provide information and assistance to parents in the area of reading also only makes good sense.

SB 1060 AAC THE USE OF RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION IN SCHOOLS.

The safety and education of children has been at the core of PTA's mission since its inception. Excessive and improper use of restraint and seclusion seriously threatens both of those goals. The use of inappropriate restraint and seclusion



methods by untrained school staff has resulted in the assault, injury, trauma and, even death of children in our schools. Our children need to be educated in an environment that is supportive and free from abuse, assault, injury, trauma and risk to life. This legislation addresses the need to train all school staff about restraint and seclusion and the preferable de-escalation techniques and the necessity to restrict restraint and seclusion for use only in emergency situations. We would also like to see a clearer definition of emergency as “an unanticipated and already occurring event that is placing the individual or others in imminent danger of physical harm”. School should be a safe place for our children.

HB 6975 AA ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY LIFE-THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES IN SCHOOL.

There is no question that the prevalence of food allergies in our children has increased. The CT Department of Education has guidelines for districts in the development of district wide management plans for students with life threatening allergies and glycogen storage disease. There are, however, several unstudied areas that could benefit from a task force looking more closely at this issue. These include the emotional and social well being of students who may feel isolated from their peers or bullied by them. Since we strive to educate the whole child any recommendations to update the state department of education guidelines to include consideration of these factors can only benefit our children. Additionally, as an association of over 44,000 parents, teachers and concerned individuals we feel it is important for CT PTA to be represented on this task force. We can bring the concerns and experience of those members to the work of the task force.

About Connecticut PTA

Connecticut PTA comprises over 44,000 members consisting of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools and well-being of children. PTA is a registered 501(c) (3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education, children’s health and child welfare. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health and welfare of children and youth.