

*Julia Pemberton*  
*First Selectman*



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## ***Town of Redding***

March 19, 2015

Dear Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, Ranking Members and Members of the Committee on Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today on behalf of the citizens of Redding in support of Raised Bill 7019, an Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement.

The Town of Redding is among an increasing number of communities with well-funded, high quality public education that are grappling with the circumstance of rapidly declining enrollment – a circumstance that is projected to continue throughout the decade. The current Minimum Budget Requirement legislation provides insufficient flexibility to well-funded districts seeking to appropriately adjust to declining enrollments, yet in a manner that is in keeping State's interests to ensure that Connecticut remains a state with access to high quality public education for all students.

The current \$3K per pupil allowance falls substantially short of meaningful savings from enrollment decline in many communities that have well-funded schools. For instance, in a community spending \$20K per student, the allowance permits only a 15% reduction per student, an amount well below typical estimates of variable costs. Similarly, the current -0.5% maximum reduction in appropriations for education falls short of realizable saving in many communities facing rapid enrollment decline. In a community that encounters a 5% annual enrollment decline, even a 50% variable cost estimate suggests realizable savings of 2.5% without having an impact on service quality.

Exempting any part of government from being reviewed for efficiencies and savings is inappropriate. Modest adjustments to the MBR made in recent years were steps in the right direction; however, Connecticut's property taxpayers need bolder moves.

I therefore respectfully ask that you support the changes set forth in Raised Bill 7019, and Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement.

Sincerely,

Julia Pemberton

First Selectman