



State of Connecticut

SENATE

SENATOR TONY HWANG

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March 19, 2015

Chairmen Fleischmann and Slossberg and esteemed members of the Education Committee:

For the record, my name is Tony Hwang and I am state Senator of Connecticut's 28th District.

I am pleased to testify in support of HB 7019, An Act Concerning The Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR). The proposed legislation makes changes to the MBR that would help our municipalities better manage their education budgets, especially districts dealing with declining enrollment. Specifically, it would:

- eliminate the current language that limits the amount per student that districts can reduce their budget from \$3,000 to a formula that is 50% of the net current expenditures per resident student
- eliminate the cap of one half of one percent that a district can reduce its budget. This legislation proposes allowing a reduction of 3% and going to SDE for approval for a higher amount
- exempt the top ten performing districts from having to comply with MBR

Towns throughout my district and across the state are facing significant declines in student enrollment, and that is projected to continue for at least the next ten years.

For example, in both Easton and Newtown, the decline is projected to be as high as 28 percent by 2024. Furthermore, according to a report published in [Connecticut Magazine](#), "In 2015, the population for people aged 5-19 is estimated to be 700,758. That number is expected to drop to 660,077 by 2020—a six percent decrease—and then to 631,241 in 2025, which is five percent less than 2020."

Our districts are essentially handcuffed by MBR in its current form. Even despite the clear and growing need for potential reductions in our education budgets, local leaders are not able to exercise the prudent financial management and discretion of spending taxpayer dollars that our residents demand and deserve.

HB 7019 would give our school districts the flexibility they need to do their job, without sacrificing the exceptional quality education that we all strive for and support. I hope you'll agree.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Kindly,

Tony Hwang

Citations: <http://www.connecticutmag.com/Blog/Education/September-2013/Connecticuts-Public-School-Enrollment-Continues-to-Decline/>