

**Testimony of Stephen P. Wright Submitted to the
Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee
March 26, 2015**

Good day, Chairman Duff, Chairman Janowski, Senator Kane, Representative Buck-Taylor and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. I thank you in advance for your time and attention to consider my reappointment to the State Board of Education.

My name is Stephen Wright and I currently reside in Trumbull. I have been married to my wife Patty for 37 years. We have three children, Nicole, Cory and Jeffery. I received my undergraduate degree (B.S.) from Florida State University in 1976 and graduated from Western New England School of Law in 1980. I am a member of the Connecticut and Texas Bars. I practice law with the firm of Berchem, Moses & Devlin, P.C. where I concentrate my practice in the area of Debtor/Creditor Rights and Commercial Litigation.

I previously served on the on the Trumbull Board of Education for nine and half years, and as Chair for six years. I was also the Chair of the Trumbull Special Needs Pre-School. During that time, I was an active member of CABA during that time, where I served as a District Director and Chair of the Professional Development Committee. For the past few years I have been an active member of NASBE (National Association of State Boards Of Education) where I have served on the Government Affairs Committee.

During my first term as a member of the State Board of Education I was a member of the Audit Committee and Chair of the Standards and Assessment Committee. In 2013, I was awarded, along with others, the Brian Frazier, Friends of Social Studies Award for my collaborative work on the Social Studies Frameworks.

I currently serve as a board member on the Bridgeport Education Foundation, Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership and the Archbishop Cardinal Sheehan Center.

I seek a second term because I want to continue the progress started during my first term on the Board. The state's graduation rate rose each of the last three years. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores placed Connecticut at the top in reading and among the top in mathematics. After years of having the largest achievement gap in the nation, our state is beginning to close it in a significant way

There is no doubt; Connecticut has a long way to go. We want every student to achieve and to fulfill their learning potential. I am confident that through the collaboration of my colleagues, the hard work of teachers, the dedicated staff of the Department of Education, the General Assembly and our Governor, this achievement gap will be reduced further over the next four years.

Our public education system must graduate students that are college and career ready, and be productive citizens in a 21st century economy and our vibrant democracy. In order to continue making progress, we must provide educators with the support they need to be successful in the classroom. Educators are the true dream weavers for our children and their efforts and

leadership are critical to our students and communities success.

Next, I want to thank you for directing education resources to the communities in greatest need, and encourage you to continue. Programs like the Commissioner's Network and Alliance Districts, that have sustained funding, are great programs that have dramatically improved student achievement in underserved communities. Every child deserves a great education, no matter where they live. An unequal state of affairs in education serves to cheat the entire state out of the greatness it would attain when all children are exposed to a great public education.

I seek this nomination because I believe everything I have discussed is doable and within reach. If I am confirmed, I pledge to do my level best to make decisions based only on what is best for all our children.

I thank you for your time and humbly request your consideration. I will be glad to answer any questions you may have of me.

Thank you.