



State of Connecticut

SENATE

SENATOR JOE MARKLEY
SIXTEENTH DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
300 CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 3400
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591
CAPITOL: (860) 240-0381
TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1421
E-MAIL: Joe.Markley@cga.ct.gov
WEBSITE: www.SenatorMarkley.com

ASSISTANT MINORITY LEADER / SCREENING CHAIRMAN

RANKING MEMBER
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
PROGRAM REVIEW & INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

March 2, 2016

Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and Honorable members of the Education Committee,

I am here to testify in favor of House Bill 5467, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A RED RIBBON PASS PROGRAM.

According to the State Department of Public Health more than one in four Connecticut high school students watches TV for three hours or more on an average school day. This trend toward inactivity is leading to an extremely unhealthy and often overweight generation of youngsters. With the Red Ribbon Pass recognition program, schools and school districts have the opportunity to help all students become more active.

The team of Marcia Phelps, Professor Carol Ciotto (Central Connecticut State University), and Dr. Marybeth Fede (Southern Connecticut State University) has begun to take steps to create a healthier classroom. Their program, Connect – Communicate – Cooperate – Collaborate is both innovative and engaging. By breaking from the norm of children constantly sitting at their desks learning in traditional and antiquated ways, these educators are taking learning to the next level. It's a terrific program that all Connecticut children could benefit from.

The very first PASS program in Connecticut was Southington Public Schools. Soon after, I had the opportunity to attend an active classroom teacher seminar in Southington. I was impressed with the educators' willingness to enhance the education our students receive in the classroom. The games the educators learned not only helped enhance the students' attention span and retention of what they were learning but were also fun and engaging.

Since I witnessed the training a few years ago in Southington, PASS has been adopted in some form in twenty five school districts across our state. This new legislation would recognize these school districts for their hard work and encourage other districts to follow suit. The Red Ribbon Pass Program will be overseen by the State Department of Education, in a way that doesn't add a tremendous amount of work for the Department. Local and regional school districts may apply based on their level of activity throughout the school day and the Department approves the request based on their physical fitness tests.

There is a movement across the country to increase physical activity – but this program is unique and does not place an unfunded mandate on the school districts. States like California, New York, and Tennessee have all created their responses to combat childhood obesity, but their programs place more of a burden on educators and have an increased cost to the district.

After getting to know the program and the women involved, I am inspired by this movement and encourage other schools and educators across the state to learn from these three women. They are creating healthy bodies, a vital ingredient to healthy minds – and good health is a benefit to our whole society. I encourage the committee to pass the Red Ribbon Pass Program.