

Raised Bill 5469

"An Act Concerning Student Data Privacy." March 2, 2016

To the chairpersons and members of the Education Committee, my name is Kirsten Creighton and I submit this testimony as the proud parent of three students currently receiving their education in the state of CT; two in middle school and one in Graduate school.

In 2015, I wrote to you in support of Raised Bill 7017, your first attempt to introduce a bill of this nature. I was quite disappointed to watch that particular bill die, rather than be brought to its full potential, providing no comfort to parents as they entered the 2015-2016 school year. However, after viewing hearings, reading testimony and witnessing the number of attempts to amend the bill into something that more suited the desires of the ed tech companies and less of the parents', and having learned more about the multitude of ways our children's data can be collected, stored, shared and misused, **I write to you today in OPPOSITION of the bill in its current form.** While I applaud you for your attempts, once again, for taking on this daunting task, I feel that if a bill is to be signed into law with the intent of protecting "Student Data Privacy" in general, then it must be a comprehensive one. That being said, I urge you to listen to the testimony provided by others who share my concern, and incorporate the many additional protections afforded to students in other states' privacy bills.

CAPE, (Connecticut Alliance for Privacy in Education), provides a clear list of protections in Raised Bill 54469 as compared to other states', and makes clear recommendations for RB 5469. <http://www.cape4kids.org/policy.html>

Online privacy threats exist on a global scale, but I can testify to a handful of times in the past two school years where my child's online user account in educational programs at school have been accessed, or discovered to be accessible, by unauthorized persons, due to poor protocol in creating secure user names and passwords. This may not seem important when considering the threats that loom beyond the school's server, but when I can sit in my living room at home and look into one of my daughters' classmates' education accounts on my home computer, that, to me, is almost of greater concern. If I, a parent with no knowledge of "hacking" or I.T. experience, by deductive reasoning alone based on my own child's login credentials, can access online book reports, benchmark testing, and see names and photos of other parents' children, this says to me that there is a serious need for regulation at the local level with respect to schools' Technology Departments and Internet Use Policies. Such policies, in my experience, tend to be one way, providing language that only addresses the student's responsibilities, not their rights, when it comes to online computer usage at school and on school related devices. The responsibilities of the school need to also be defined and published at the beginning of each school year.

Also, with respect to omissions, I believe any student bill should encompass the full span of Pre-K through highest level of undergrad/graduate schooling, and not be limited to K-12. As a parent of children in this full range, I have great concerns about ALL of their student records, especially following the recent data breach at UConn. One major data system that affects the larger grade span is not even mentioned in this bill, and that is the P20-WIN data system. As a parent and taxpayer helping to fund this extremely costly initiative, which has been built to track my children over the formative years of their lives, I insist that P20WIN be regulated in law to protect them.

In closing, I want to again thank you for addressing this need, and I believe RB 5469 is a great START to having this discussion. Local, state and federal agencies should be held equally accountable in protecting our children's personal and academic information. I look forward to viewing the hearing and urge you to use RB 5469 only as a launchpad for constructing a complete bill.

Respectfully submitted, Kirsten Creighton