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Good morning Chairmen and members of the Committee. I am Attorney Deborah G. Stevenson, and I practice Education Law and Constitutional Law. Today I offer this testimony in both in my personal and professional capacity regarding several bills, two of which I **Support** - **H.B. 5555 and S.B. 380**;

four of which I urge you to **Reject** - **H.B. 5550, H.B. 5551, H.B. 5552, and S.B. 381**. To make it easier for the members of the Committee, I have summarized my comments. I would be happy to engage in further conversation about any of these bills prior to your vote.

Bills to SUPPORT:

H.B. 5555 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE MINIMUM BUDGET REQUIREMENT AND PROHIBITING THE INCLUSION OF PARTICIPATION RATES FOR THE STATE-WIDE MASTERY EXAMINATION IN THE CALCULATION OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT'S ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX SCORE.

Support - Qualified - The participation rates for the state wide "mastery examination" should not be used in any way, at any time, to affect any school, school district, or individual student.

S.B. 380 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXCLUSION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE RESULTS ON THE MASTERY EXAMINATION FROM TEACHER EVALUATIONS.

Support generally.

Bills Urged to REJECT:

H.B. 5550 - AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

Reject - Sec. 13 - Regarding searches by school employees of electronic devices. The students should have the same Constitutional rights against unreasonable searches and seizures as individual adults in the community.

H.B. 5551 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK OF SCHOOLS.

Reject.

Oppose any bill that seeks to wrest control from the local board of education only to place control in the hands of the state.

Conflicts with existing statutory authority of local Boards of Education.

Impermissibly and unconstitutionally disenfranchises the electorate who voted for members of the Board of Education to act on educational issues.

Votes for Board of Education members are rendered a nullity when the authority of local board members is removed and the boards are rendered powerless.

Impermissibly and unconstitutional violates the right of parents to the upbringing and education of their children through nullification of their vote for members of the Boards of Education.

Renders local boards of education into mere puppets of the state.

Instead, the state should be empowering local boards of education with increased flexibility so that they can better meet the needs of each individual child.

H.B. 5552 - AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL EDUCATION

Reject.

It may eliminate costs to the state by resolving disputes early, but those costs should not be transferred to parents and local boards of education by compelling them to hire an adjudicator prior to invoking their due process rights to a hearing.

In addition, the provision will cause other problems:

Additional delay will ensue in providing the child with an appropriate education

Parties may argue about third party adjudicator - no provision made for how disagreement is to be resolve

No provision is made about who pays for third party adjudicator

Two days may not be sufficient to present witnesses and evidence

The adjudicator may make a decision without full facts presented

Findings of fact and recommendations should not be considered at a due

process hearing - If anything, the decision should be treated as mediation decisions are - in confidence with nothing said there used in additional due process hearings

It would be much more beneficial to require mandatory attendance at mediation prior to due process hearing.

S.B. 381 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY SCHOOL CLIMATE.

Reject.

No parents are designated as members of the task force. The task force will be studying, among other things, social and emotional learning - a traditional duty and obligation of parental instruction.