



Advocating for teachers
and public education

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National Education Association

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF

MELANIE I. KOLEK, LEGAL COUNSEL

AND

CHRISTOPHER P. HANKINS, LEGAL COUNSEL

BEFORE THE

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REGARDING

PROPOSED SENATE BILL NO 319

Our names are Melanie I. Kolek and Christopher P. Hankins, both Legal Counsel for the Connecticut Education Association (CEA). We are commenting regarding proposed Senate Bill Number 319.

We support notification to schools of protective or restraining orders affecting students. One concern, however, is regarding notification to the school of the order. As written, the superintendent is notified and shall disclose the order and information only to the principal of the school in which such person is a student. The principal or supervisory agent may disclose that information only to special services staff or a consultant, for the purposes of assessing risk, modifying an educational plan or for disciplinary purposes, in relevant part. At no time is the teacher, presumably the child's primary caregiver during most school hours, advised of the order in place, putting the teacher at a significant

disadvantage to keep herself and all students in her charge safe. One can imagine a situation where the principal or her agent is unavailable and no one else in the school knows of the order, putting the entire school at risk. Better language would contemplate the teacher being advised of the order in place in order to avoid certain risks in the event the principal or support staff she shared this information with are unavailable.

It is for these reasons that CEA urges your support for Bill 319 with the request that teachers be told of the order in place.