Testimony of
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*SB 380 An Act Concerning Exclusion of Student Performance Results
on the Mastery Examination from Teacher Evaluations*

Education Committee Hearing
March 7, 2016

Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the committee: my name is Brian Bisson, and I am the Vice-President of the State Vocational Federation of Teachers, a union of 1200 educators in the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS). I also have worked as a carpentry instructor at Windham Technical High School, and graduated from the school. I am testifying today on behalf of SB 380, An Act Concerning the Exclusion of Student Performance Results on the Mastery Examination from Teacher Evaluations.

As a trade teacher, I do not want 22.5% of my evaluation to be based on standardized tests that do not reflect my curriculum or my job performance. Our job as trade teachers is to help our students develop the skills necessary to be successful in their trade so they can build middle-class lives. The SATs, or any other literacy or math test, does not represent our role or our mission in the classroom. Why is it nearly 1/4th of our evaluation?

The result of this disconnection between what we are doing in the classroom and the standardized test has made teachers question the legitimacy of the evaluation system as a whole. Last year, as SVFT Vice President, I received a great number of phone calls with teachers concerned about their evaluation and the impact of the standardized test on it. This year, I have received far fewer. Teachers understand that if their evaluation is based on subject matter they do not teach, it has no validity. Decoupling the evaluation from standardized tests is the only way for our teachers see it as a legitimate tool to improve their practice.

SB 380 is not an attempt to circumvent the evaluation system; it is a way to make it relevant to the people it is designed to help. I strongly support this bill, and ask you to do the same. Thank you.