



UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

CONNECTICUT

Testimony for the
Education Committee
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University of Saint Joseph
March 7, 2016

On behalf of the University of Saint Joseph I am submitting testimony in support of two bills, **S.B. 382 AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS** and **H.B. 5550 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES**.

S.B. 382 AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS seeks to require the Department of Education and the Office of Higher Education to enter into an agreement with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) for the purposes of accrediting and establishing standards for teacher preparation programs in the state. In recognition of the need for high quality standards for educator preparation programs within the state of Connecticut and the existence of an aligned system for program approval and national accreditation, we support the raised bill that Connecticut enters into a partnership agreement with CAEP. This arrangement will provide guidance and support for continuous program improvement and sustain existing practices outlined in our CT-NCATE Partnership agreement which expires in December 2016.

Each of the approved educator preparation programs in Connecticut is unique, differentiated by mission and adaptation to regional needs. Given these differences in programs, the conditions for state approval and national accreditation should promote program effectiveness without jeopardizing individuality and innovation.

For educator preparation programs, I support the state entering into a partnership with CAEP that will promote excellence through an evidence-based, continuous improvement program that will advance our ability to prepare educators who are able to effectively educate P-12 students and to make positive contributions to the schools and communities in which they work.

I would ask the Committee to amend the bill language slightly to include private institutions and alternative providers as well as the public institutions as we currently go through a similar review process by the State Department of Education.

The University of Saint Joseph currently is nationally accredited through NCATE and will continue to maintain national accreditation through CAEP. This bill which seeks to align state level program approval with national accreditation will allow the University of Saint Joseph School of Education to continue its work in promoting the University's core values while preparing teachers aligned with the schools vision as articulated in our conceptual framework. National Accreditation aligned with state level program approval will strengthen all Connecticut teacher preparation providers while allowing each of us to provide programs aligned with our distinct institutional mission and vision.

I strongly support Sections 2 and 3 of H.B. **5550 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES** which seeks to extend the implementation date to 2018 for the requirement that an individual must possess a master's degree in an appropriate subject matter area, as determined by the State Board of Education, related to such teacher's certification endorsement area.

The deadline extension is critical because the State Board of Education has not yet determined the guidelines as to what is an "appropriate subject matter area". Once such guidelines are determined, faculty and administrators will have the time necessary to successfully restructure its programs to meet the regulatory guidelines, seek program approval as necessary and educate our students of the upcoming regulatory changes to teacher licensure in a timely and considerate manner under present regulations.

In the absence of State Board of Education guidelines, to be fair to students who are currently and soon to be enrolled in a master's degree program that will lead to initial licensure AFTER July 1 of this year, I am asking for your support to push the date of implementation back two years to 2018. We do not want students currently enrolled in an initial licensure master's degree program only to find out it does not meet the State Board of Education's guidelines. Institutions of Higher Education have no guidelines upon which to answer student questions, and revise programs.

At a time when we are working collectively to encourage highly qualified candidates into the teaching profession, especially minority teacher candidates, we are moving forward with legislation that is not supported by research, and provides no guidelines for implementation. I anticipate without an opportunity to implement this legislation thoughtfully we will lose additional teacher candidates entering the field and those teachers soon to be licensed will find themselves caught in the middle of legislation that is unclear due to the lack of guidelines for implementation.

Thank you for your consideration of both of these important bills.

Ann Mounie-Baellargion
3/7/16