

**Testimony before the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee**

**Testimony of James C. Ferguson**

**March 8, 2016**

Good afternoon Senator Duff, Representative Janowski, Senator Kane, Representative Buck-Taylor and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is James Ferguson, and it is an honor and a privilege to be reappointed to the Education Arbitration Board by Governor Dannel Malloy. My sincere thank you to this committee for the opportunity to appear before you to speak about my desire to serve on the Education Arbitration Board.

In 1968 I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Geography from Southern Connecticut State University. From 1968 to 1973 I was employed by the New Haven Board of Education as a History teacher at Richard C. Lee High School. In 1976, after graduating from Western New England College School of Law with a Juris Doctor and being appointed to the Connecticut Bar, I was employed as a Field Representative and Staff Counsel for AFT Connecticut where I worked until 1984. In 1984, I entered private practice as a partner in the law firm of Sherbacow, McWeeny & Ferguson, followed in 1987 by a two-year stint as a partner in the firm of McWeeny & Ferguson. In 1989, I began my present position as a principal in the law firm of Ferguson, Doyle & Chester, where I continue to practice to this day.

As a principal in the law firm of Ferguson, Doyle & Chester, our practice is concentrated in public and private sector labor law. Our clients include AFT Connecticut, Uniformed Professional Firefighters of Connecticut, and numerous other public and private sector Unions throughout the State of Connecticut. During my practice of law I have been engaged in all facets of labor law, including negotiations of collective bargaining agreements, representation of clients before grievance arbitration panels, sat as an arbitrator under both the Municipal Employees Relations Act and as a member of the Education Arbitration panel. My cases have involved salary issues, health insurance, pensions, leave benefits, promotions, demotions, layoffs, work assignments, and many other facets of labor law.

As a former teacher who had school years disrupted by three labor disputes, I fully appreciate the impact and positive affect that Teacher Negotiations Act and binding arbitration has played in resolving disputes between labor and management. One purpose of binding arbitration is to resolve labor disputes without disrupting the educational process and provide both labor and management an effective mechanism to resolve their differences. I believe the binding arbitration process is a viable one that balances the interests of the taxpayers, the community, and the certified employees. I look forward, with your approval, to continuing to participate in this important process. Not only do I bring my years of relevant experience as an advocate for teachers to the process, but I also bring the pragmatic experience of a

taxpayer and a parent of children who were educated in the New Haven public schools.

Again, I am honored to appear before this committee today, and of being reappointed by Governor Malloy. I appreciate your attention and I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you might have. Thank you.