

Testimony for the
Education Committee
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On behalf of the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education, 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. We support the raised bill. It addresses the need for both high quality standards for educator preparation programs within the state of Connecticut and the alignment of program approval and national accreditation. The proposed agreement 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.

Connecticut has both some of the highest performing schools in the nation and one of the nation's largest racial achievement gaps. Preparing teachers who can assist all students in attaining high standards is imperative for the state's well-being. Addressing this need requires that all educator preparation programs be held to high standards and evidence-based, continuous improvement practices like those delineated in the CAEP accreditation process. A state partnership with CAEP will advance our ability to prepare educators able to effectively educate all of Connecticut's P-12 students.

In addition, the state's partnership with CAEP will recognize the unique and differentiated missions of the approved educator preparation programs in Connecticut. These missions have arisen in response to regional and state needs. The Neag School of Education's educator preparation programs are nationally and internationally recognized for their innovative practices, particularly our vital partnerships with Connecticut public school districts. Our teacher preparation program is one of ten institutions selected by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education to participate in its national efforts to increase the diversity of the teaching force. We are also enacting a major effort to redesign coursework, clinical placements, and assessments to ensure beginning teachers can effectively enact high-leverage teaching practices that support K-12 student learning. The conditions for state and national accreditation should promote these kinds of efforts and recognize and support program effectiveness without jeopardizing the different missions and innovations across educator preparation programs.

To that end, I both support the state entering into a partnership with CAEP and 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.

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 finalized the guidelines as to what is an "appropriate subject matter area." Our faculty and administrators need this time to restructure our programs so that they not only adhere to the policy guidelines but that they do so in a way that also enriches the learning and professional development opportunities we provide our teacher candidates and existing teachers and so that we can seek program approval as necessary. We also need time to advise and support our students in meeting the new regulations. Given the demands that teacher candidates and many practicing teachers have and the financial burden that such legislation would impose on them now versus over an extended period of time, I support such changes to the act.

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

Sincerely,



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