

Testimony of John Bestor
Education Committee Public Hearing
March 7, 2016

Regarding: SB 378: "AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS TASK FORCE".

I am writing in opposition to SB 378: AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS TASK FORCE.

At this time, I ask that you vote down SB 378 and make it abundantly clear that the rights of parents to protect their children from perceived harm and the rights of older students to determine their own college and career course will continue to be valued by this legislature.

I have been carefully monitoring the progress of the Mastery Examination Task Force that the legislature's Education Committee called for in the last session. I am deeply troubled that the task force is comprised of members whose allegiance to flawed policies will prohibit it from making recommendations next January that will include well-considered input from teachers and school leaders who know students best. If the Interim Report which was presented to you last month and the recent news conference to cut back on a small portion of the SBAC is any indicator, this Mastery Examination Task Force has signaled that it is not interested in pursuing more "authentic" assessment measures. Although we have education leaders in our State who have shown initiative in more "authentic" assessments, they have, thus far, been excluded from presenting their ideas to the task force.

I am fearful that another "task force" will simply continue to do the bidding of its members who - if past practice is any indicator - will attempt to make passing a statewide mastery examination a requirement of graduation. The task force may be used as a vehicle for taking rights away from parents and students who refuse complying with harmful test requirements.

Respectfully submitted,

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