



SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

ISABELLE FARRINGTON COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Testimony for the Education Committee

March 7, 2016

On behalf of Sacred Heart University, 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 State 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.

Having standards that are nationally recognized enable schools and colleges of education, such as the one that I lead at the Isabelle Farrington College of Education, to make improvements that in accord with up-to-date standards designed by experts inside and outside of Connecticut. Such standards enable community stakeholders—as well as prospective faculty members and students—to make informed decisions as they compare institutions with unique missions. It is my goal to attract the best talent to my college, and a process of state approval that complements national accreditation supports this.

S.B. 382 provides guidance and support for continuous program improvement at institutions such as Sacred Heart University. Essentially, it improves upon the partnership arrangement between the Connecticut State Department of Education and CAEP's predecessor organization, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). This earlier agreement expires December 2016. The newly designed CAEP standards set a higher bar. For example, they promote a diverse teaching force and emphasize high-quality clinical experiences, in which colleges and universities partner with PK-12 schools and school districts.

A partnership between Connecticut and CAEP is in the state's best interest. It enhances the ability of Connecticut's well-regarded public education system to prepare professionals who effectively educate PK-12 students. This in turn enables more of our young people to positively contribute to Connecticut's families, polity, and economy.

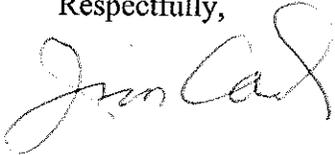
Please amend the language slightly to include private institutions and alternative providers as well as the public institutions, since we are all reviewed through a similar process by the State Department of Education.

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 each educator must earn a master's degree in an appropriate subject matter area, as determined by the State Board of Education, to maintain certification.

The deadline extension is critical because the State Board of Education has not finalized guidelines as to what constitutes an "appropriate subject matter area." Faculty and administrators at Sacred Heart University will need this time to restructure the curriculum, teach out students in a timely and considerate manner under present regulations, and seek program approval as necessary.

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

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim Carl".

James "Jim" Carl, Ph.D.
Dean