



Testimony of
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Government Elections and Elections Committee Hearing
March 18, 2016

***SB 439 An Act Concerning the State Contracting Standards Board and
Requirements for Privatization Contracts***

Good afternoon Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and members of the GAE Committee. I am Jean Morningstar, First Vice President of AFT Connecticut and a member of the State Contracting Standards Board. AFT Connecticut represents nearly 30,000 members in both the public and private sector. I want to thank you very much for raising SB 439, An Act Concerning the State Contracting Standards Board and Requirements for Privatization Contracts. I am pleased to speak in favor of this bill.

When I testified in the Appropriations public hearing a few weeks ago, I spoke about the hardship of obtaining a quorum with the number of vacancies remaining on the Board. I think it is no coincidence that three of the four vacancies have been filled since this committee submitted this bill. I cannot thank you enough.

After this Board was formed in response to Governor Rowland's inappropriate relationships with state contractors, it has never been able to fulfill its mission. Suffering from lack of staff, lack of appointments, and downright avoidance by state agencies, the Board has not been able to do its mandated work. There is no idea, as reported by OPM Secretary Barnes, how much money this state is spending on privatization contracts. That is just unacceptable. Coupling that with the failure of agencies to comply with the existing statute, it is no wonder that we have a budget shortfall.

I can assure you that contracts are being signed, privatization is happening without scrutiny, and lots of money is involved. I have been a member of this Board since July 1, 2013, and I have only seen one, and yes, I said one, contract for review. There may have been as many as 2 seen in a subcommittee where there was a dispute over who was awarded a contract.

People assume that privatizing the delivery of state services makes them cheaper and more efficient, but that does not make it so. We have no data to support that evidence. May I remind everyone of the debacle of privatizing Corrections? Who is afraid of this costing? Why aren't we seeing the evidence at the Board? I appreciate this legislation for defining privatization and the requirement for collective bargaining agents to be notified and have the issue discussed.

All of the Higher Education constituent units were required to develop procurement regulations to share with the Board. This has never happened. Therefore, I am very pleased to see a requirement that this be done by January 1, 2016, or the Higher Education institutions will be subjected to the overall rules of this Board. I would prefer Higher Education to have to fully follow

the statute, but this is certainly a great start for them to account for their procurements and private contracts.

I strongly urge you to support this bill. Do it for taxpayers, the state, and the employees who provide public services.

Thank you.