

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
Education Committee Public Hearing
March 16, 2017

H.B. No. 7255 (RAISED): AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY REGARDING THE CREATION OF A SPECIAL EDUCATION PREDICTABLE COST COOPERATIVE.

I am opposed to HB No. 7255.

It is extremely dangerous to assign a task force to look at the special education predictable cost cooperative proposed by the Connecticut School Finance Project which promotes itself as a neutral player, but has problematic ties to education reform groups that favor privatization solutions for what has always been the responsibility of the public sector. Despite its own claims, the CSFP has no expertise in the field of school finance. There is no evidence that they have conducted a fair and balanced study of the issues associated with special education costs in order to fully understand the scope of difficulties inherent in their proposal. It is specifically problematic when the legislature assigns a task force to study one particular option for special education finance which is essentially an unproven experiment and then allows those invested in its passage to serve or conspire with committee members in the study.

I can only hope that you will seek an independent study of the problem that includes a comprehensive look at all education costs, so a more cohesive and equitable solution to the funding problems before our State is necessary before moving forward with band-aid solutions. It remains our responsibility as citizens to properly fund public education. It is unconscionable to experiment with education choices available to students with special needs and their parents who are often desperate to obtain services for their child.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Burnham
Cheshire, CT