

March 18, 2019

Marty Isaac, Board of Finance, Trumbull CT

Chairman and members of the CT Education Committee, my name is Marty Isaac, and I am on the board of finance in Trumbull CT.

My views presented today are my own. I am here to advocate for later school start times as part of HB 1069, AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

The science is irrefutable. The AMA, the CDC, the American Psychological Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, among others, have all issued statements that middle and high schools should not begin before 8:30 am, due to the overwhelming scientific evidence that school start times impact the health and safety of children.

As the American Academy of Sleep Medicine states: In puberty a natural shift occurs in the timing of the body's internal "circadian" clock, causing most teens to experience a biological drive for a late-night bedtime. Therefore, early middle school and high school start times make it difficult for students to get the 8 to 10 hours of nightly sleep that the AASM recommends for optimal teen health. As a result,

nearly 73 percent of high school students report getting fewer than 8 hours of sleep on an average school night, increasing their risk of depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation and motor vehicle accidents.

A representative from the CA legislature, Anthony Portantino stated it powerfully: Establishing a time before which schools should not begin mandated instruction is as fundamental as requiring schools to turn on the heat when the temperature falls below a certain level. Local districts would still set their own hours; they need only meet the minimum 'no earlier than' start time that's proven to be essential to students' well-being. It's time for an evidence-based, sound policy discussion that prioritizes student health and achievement. Teaching adolescents at a time they cannot effectively learn is an ineffective use of public funds and undermines our children's health and their chances for success today and in the future."

Several towns in CT have either moved to later times or are looking into it. Trumbull is in the early stages of evaluation.

My concern with a town by town approach is twofold:

- First, safety issues should not be optional and up to towns to address. Typically, the state acts

with urgency when our children's health is at stake.

- Second, state wide coordination would make this effort progress far more quickly and, importantly, at lower cost (particularly as it relates to coordinating inter district sporting events).

Therefore, I believe, we would all be far better served if the state mandated that all middle and high school classes begin no earlier than 8:30am.

In the past, we did not understand the danger early start times and inadequate sleep posed to our children.

We know now; maintaining the status quo harms our children.

It is time to act.

Thank you for giving me this time to share this information with the committee.