From: Keryn Cerbone  
Ridgefield, CT

OPPOSITION TO HB 7150

Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on HB 7150.

I am a life-long Connecticut resident: I lived in Norwalk for my first 32 years, and have lived in Ridgefield, CT for the last 31 years. I have a vested interest in staying in Connecticut, as I still have family members in the state.

I understand that the State determines the pension payments for teachers. Locally, we have no say in pension determinations.

Pensions and lifetime medical and dental coverage are practically unheard of today in the private sector – because it’s just too expensive. My husband’s company recently ended providing a Medicare Supplement Plan at full cost (not subsidized cost) to retirees. It’s nice for the State of CT. to want to be magnanimous, but not when it can’t afford it. It’s time for our State government to follow what most families, towns and companies have had to learn to do: tighten its belt and cut back on costly benefits and programs that the State simply can no longer afford. While I do not advocate changing pensions and benefits for current retirees, I do feel it’s necessary to change these benefits going forward for the State to return to fiscal stability.

There are not just “rich people” living in the suburbs. There are middle income families and retirees on fixed incomes. The growth in local property taxes are simply not sustainable, and if Hartford thinks there is a never-ending flow of money from that spigot – it’s simply not true. People have voted with their feet and many of our friends have already left the state. We would be right behind them if not for family that currently lives here, and who depend on us to be here for them.

Thank you for reading my testimony. Again, I am opposed to HB 7150. I hope you DO NOT SUPPORT THIS BILL, and instead, put forth changes to reduce and/or eliminate pension and post retirement costs for state workers and teachers on a prospective basis.

Thank you,

[Signature]

Keryn Cerbone  
Ridgefield, CT