To all members of the Education Committee:

Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony on HB 7150. I am a parent of three public school students and strongly oppose HB 7150, and any other bill that would transfer State pension liability to municipalities.

I am very concerned with the Governor's proposal which requires municipalities to fund a portion of teacher pension costs. This proposal represents abandonment of State responsibility due to years of fiscal mismanagement, through no fault of local municipalities. State leadership has failed to fund the pension plan they created, giving local municipalities no say in the design or financial maintenance of the fund, preferring instead to ignore the growing problem until reaching the point of no return. Instead of using this as an opportunity to restructure the pension plan going forward for fiscal sustainability, the bill proposes to "kick the can" down the road by transferring part of the burden to municipalities, while making no attempt to actually solve the underlying problem.

Perhaps most disturbing is penalizing local municipalities with a surcharge for those whose teacher salaries exceed the state median. This does not account for higher costs of living in regions such as Fairfield County or the impact of binding arbitration - two factors entirely beyond local control which impact salary agreements. If local municipalities will be forced to pay, they must have a seat at the negotiating table for any agreements impacting local budgets and taxpayers.

I hope you will oppose HB 7150, and any other legislation proposing transfer of State pension liability to local municipalities.

Thank you for reading my testimony, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

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