Dear Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez and all of the esteemed members of the Education Committee,

I am writing today in support of HB7250 AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPROVEMENT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PLAY. As a current 6th grade teacher in a Connecticut public school and recent new mom, I am in full support this bill for many reasons.

For the last eleven years, I have taught sixth grade in Connecticut. Over the course of my career, I have seen a decline in students' ability to problem solve, collaborate, and compromise. It wasn't until I talked to a kindergarten teacher that I realized what might be happening - students in lower grades are spending more time on academics (some of which are developmentally inappropriate) and less time on play. As such, they come to sixth grade without basic social and problem-solving skills. As teachers, we have to spend valuable time teaching these skills and addressing the fallout from the lack of these skills, which ultimately takes away from our academic time.

As a new mom, I also worry about the shift in lower elementary grades away from play-based learning. My son is now 20 months and I have had the pleasure of watching him learn about the world around him through imaginative play, exploration, and trial-and-error. He has developed great fine and gross motor skills by having access to toys, everyday objects, and mimicking those around him. Should he be forced to sit at a desk for extended periods come kindergarten, I worry that the play-based learning that has been so essential in his personal growth will disappear, affecting his social growth.

I urge you to support HB7250 to help all Connecticut children.

Sincerely,

Shannon Carlson