Good morning Chairman Sanchez and Chairman McCrory and distinguished members of the Education Committee. I want to thank the committee for providing me with the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 7250.

HB 7250 would require elementary schools, K-5, and preschool program providers to include at least two separate blocks of recess and a minimum of fifty minutes per school day. This means that children would have at least fifty minutes of undirected play during each school day in order to improve educational outcomes, develop children's social skills, strengthen their physical development, and improve their emotional well-being.

I am supporting this bill because the research is clear that academic success at a young age is improved with increased recess. This legislation was featured recently in the New York Times and the benefits of this policy shift included less disciplinary actions taken on children, improved exam results and academic outcomes, and an improvement of their health status. On top of that, kids with additional recess gained enhanced creativity and problem-solving techniques required for computer use in the 21st century.

The Nation of Finland understands research based education decision making and they rank high on the Program for International Assessment for educational outcomes. This assessment measures student’s performance in math, reading, and science. Students in 1st Grade in Finland only spend 4.5 hours in the classroom and they spend 1.5 hours in recess. Our bill doesn’t go as far as Finland in providing 90 minutes of recess, but we should consider what they are doing because Finland consistently outperforms the United States in terms of education outcomes.
Scientific research has found that the human brain slows down and essentially goes to sleep after a child has been sitting for 20 minutes. Furthermore, there is enough time in each school day at the pre-school and elementary school level for children to get two recesses for a total of 50 minutes per day and still get the 960 hours per school year in academic instruction time that is currently a State requirement. This isn’t a choice between instructional time and recess time; there is enough time in the current school day and year to provide kids two recess periods per day and 50 total minutes of recess per day, and meet the academic instructional requirements that already exist.

The result will be better outcomes for kids. This isn’t an unfunded mandate; it is simply helping children to improve their education outcomes, and insuring that all children are given the best chance to succeed academically. By adopting what Finland, other Nations, and increasingly other States in the country are already doing or considering doing, we can provide a better experience in schools for children of the State of Connecticut. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Geoff Luxenberg
State Representative
12th District