Education Committee
March 6, 2019
LOB 2E       2:00 PM

In SUPPORT of Senate Bill 956
An Act Concerning a Comprehensive School Counselor Program

Chairman McCrory, Chairman Sanchez, and distinguished members of the Education Committee, I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 956, An Act Concerning a Comprehensive School Counselor Program.

My name is Cathy Osten and I represent the 19th Senate District, which includes the towns of Columbia, Franklin, Hebron, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Marlborough, Montville, Norwich, and Sprague.

Similar to Senate Bill 464, which I introduced earlier this year, SB 956 seeks to build upon PA 18-15 we passed last year to increase access to school counselors for our school children across the state. This bill calls for the creation of uniform, statewide school counseling program guidelines. The State Board of Education, working in consultation with the CT School Counselor Association, would be tasked with developing these uniform guidelines. The bill requires that such guidelines include information on academic, social-emotional and post-secondary and career readiness programing.

While I am supportive of the underlying bill, I respectfully request, however, that the committee amend the bill to include career programming in manufacturing and other trades in the school counseling guidelines. We must recognize that not every student wants to attend a traditional college or university. There are wonderful, exciting, and rewarding career paths in a myriad of fields and industries; in which some of our state’s employers have identified incredible workforce shortages.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 956. I look forward to working with the leadership and members of this committee on this bill’s passage.