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**Testimony of  
The Connecticut Education Association  
Before the  
Committee on Children**

**Re: HB 5145 AAC The Annual Reporting of the Number of  
Verified Acts of Bullying in Schools**

February 18, 2020

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Linehan, Senator Kelly, and Representative Green, and distinguished members of the Committee on Children. The Connecticut Education Association, which is an organization representing active and retired teachers from over 150 school districts across Connecticut, respectfully submits comments regarding HB 5145.

CEA commends this committee for revising the bullying statute last session to more comprehensively address school climate. However, we do not support the proposed change in reporting requirements proposed in HB 5145.

HB 5145 would eliminate a requirement for school districts to annually report the number of bullying incidents to the State Department of Education. While the proposal in HB 5145 may be well intentioned, we are concerned that eliminating reporting could have unintended consequences. Reporting helps to shine a light on areas that require attention, such as the condition of school climate. Eliminating reporting requirements could compromise efforts to improve school learning conditions.

One only has to look at news reports from earlier this month to recognize the risks of removing reporting requirements on issues affecting students. A recent news report by the New Haven Independent uncovered the intentional misreporting of student suspension by a charter school chain in New Haven. This same chain was cited years ago by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Civil Rights for delivering excessive discipline to children of color. Our concern is that if there were no statewide reporting requirement for issues, abuses could run rampant. Without the statewide collection of bullying data, very real problems would get swept under the rug — a problem that already occurs but would only be made worse by eliminating reporting requirements.

Thank you for your consideration.