

Education Committee
Public Hearing – March 17, 2021

HB 6617 AAC Authorization Of State Grant Commitments For School Building Projects And Revisions To The School Building Projects Statutes, Section 2, Subsection 6

Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, Executive Director, The Connecticut Oral Health Initiative, Inc.

Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarthy, Senator Abrams, Representative Barry, and distinguished members of the Education Committee,

My name is Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin and I am testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative (COHI). COHI is a nonprofit oral health advocacy organization with the mission of increasing access to quality, affordable oral health services for all Connecticut residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support of House Bill 6617** which in Section 2, subsection 6, will require that any newly constructed public school, or a public school undergoing major renovations, include water bottle filling stations. I would also like to request that language be added to this section to strengthen the bill.

Section 2, subsection 6 of this bill contains language that would require any newly constructed public school, or any public school undergoing major renovations, include water bottle filling stations in their plans. While I am in strong support of this language, I respectfully request that it be amended to include language that will ensure that there are minimal standards to follow with regards to the placement of these stations. It needs to be stated that there should be “at least one water bottle filling station per 100 students; at least one water bottle filling station on each floor or wing of the building; and at least one water bottle filling station in all food service areas.” I feel that with the requested amended language that this will be a much stronger bill for which we are in full support.

Every child should have access to clean drinking water.

In addition to the many benefits drinking water has on a child’s health, it has great benefits to oral health and reducing dental decay. Dental decay is the most common chronic disease among children; it is five (5) times as common as asthma and contributes to missed school days and lower grades. Drinking water throughout the day reduces the risk of dental decay by naturally washing away cavity-causing bacteria and sugars.

Free water bottle filling stations are an ecofriendly and sanitary way to encourage students and school staff to drink water throughout the day.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

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