

To: The CT. State Legislature Education Committee

From: Sanford Pilz

Re: The Public Hearing on March 17 - HB 6617 AAC Authorization Of State Grant

Commitments For School Building Projects And Revisions To The School Building

Projects Statutes-Section 2, Subsection 6

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Sanford Pilz and I am a resident of Newington. I am speaking on behalf of the school where I have been a teacher for the past 29 years - Martin Kellogg Middle School in Newington. I would like to thank the leadership and members of the Education Committee for providing me with the opportunity to express my support for 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.”

If I were asked to support this bill 18 months ago, I might have ignored this request and used the request that “I was too busy to write a letter.” The past year of my life has had such an impact that I now feel that this bill is vitally important. Here is why - This past year, every teacher and every student has been required to bring a water bottle to work. Every water fountain in our school is taped up and not permitted for use. As a result, we use our water filling station that is in our school cafeteria. The results are astounding. Not sharing water fountains with other people, as well as wearing masks has led to our healthiest year in my 29 year tenure. I know that sounds crazy with Covid 19, but I am 65 years old, and this is the first Winter that I can remember not getting sick. No colds, no fever, no stomach ailments - perfect health! The students are the same way.

My fear is that we will not learn from our previous mistakes. We now know that we can take precautions to prevent multiple illnesses in the future. My one regret is that we only have one filling station in the entire school. This makes it inconvenient for the students to refill their water bottles on a regular basis. I think that it would be a mistake in the development of future schools to permit this somewhat archaic practice to continue. Please seriously consider requiring that all future schools provide the students and staff members a way to safely protect their health by supplying them with water filling stations.

I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sanford O. Pilz

Wellness Teacher/Martin Kellogg Middle School - Newington Ct./spilz@npsct.org