

Sena Wazer
CGA Education Committee
Testimony in support of HB 5285
3/4/2022

Good evening Honorable Co-Chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez, and distinguished members of the education committee.

My name is Sena Wazer, and I am the Director of Sunrise CT, and an 18 year old climate activist from Mansfield.

I am here today to speak in support of HB 5285, and specifically in relation to making climate education mandatory in all public schools.

Through my role in Sunrise CT I regularly speak with young people, ranging from elementary to college age, about climate change. And what I hear again and again is that these young people are not receiving climate education. They are not being informed about this issue so that they can take that information and use it in the rest of their lives.

In 2020, Sunrise CT conducted a survey asking students if they had received climate education. It was completed by 200 students from many CT towns, including Middletown, Meriden, and Suffield.

When asked if they felt that they were taught enough about climate change to make informed decisions on the topic, over 55% responded that they had not received enough climate education to make informed decisions.

If students do receive climate education, it's generally only through Advanced Placement classes or other electives. It's not standardized, and most students don't receive any education at all.

On a more personal note, my sister is currently a junior in high school and one of my best friends is a senior. Throughout their high school careers, neither of them has received any climate education whatsoever.

Not only is a lack of climate education disempowering students by not teaching them about this critical issue, but it is also shutting them off from possible professions, such as careers in green building, clean energy, environmental justice, environmental infrastructure, and climate nonprofits.

Young people across our state are not being taught about climate change. They are left to do their own research without any support or resources. This is the defining issue of my generation, one that we have to bear the consequences of, and they deserve to learn about climate change through public schools.

Please ensure that every student, no matter where they live, is able to receive climate education, which will be vital for their future. Please vote in support of HB 5285.

Thank you.
Sena Wazer