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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

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Calling from Senate Agenda Number 1, Emergency
Certified Bill 2053, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE
PROVISIONS OF THE BUDGET CONCERNING EDUCATION
AUTHORIZING STATE GRANT COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL
BUILDING PROJECTS, MAKING CHANGES TO THE STATUTES
CONCERNING SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AND OTHER
EDUCATION STATUTES. The bill is accompanied by
emergency certification, signed Donald E. Williams,
Jr., President Pro Tempore of the Senate; Christopher
G. Donovan, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I move passage of the emergency
certified bill.

THE CHAIR:

Acting on approval of the bill, sir, would you
like to remark further?

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

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Thank you, sir.

Prior to my explanation of the bill, I just would like to take a few moments and thank our staff that worked awfully hard for the last couple of months on the bill that is before us now.

I'd like to thank Sarah and Alan from OFA. They are -- been our stalwarts in putting the numbers together and going with the Department of Education and reviewing their numbers and working with OPM. They did an excellent job, both Sarah Bourne and Alan Shepard. Soncia Coleman, who has been with the education committee now for quite some time, we're going to be losing her. She's going to be moving over to the Judiciary Committee next session, but she's been a great help along with the person that's substituting for her, John Moran, who's new, has helped us out in our meetings.

Judith Lohman, the woman who most of us don't know what we'd do without her in the Legislature, she is just a tremendous asset. We refer to her as the chair of our screening committee in the Education Committee because she keeps everything in order, keeps the business moving, and just does an excellent job.

Our Senate Democratic staff Joe Quinn -- Attorney

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Joe Quinn, Ellen Skeletar, and Kevin Graff, our chief of staff, were very helpful through this process. Our chairs of the Appropriations Committee, Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian, working side-by-side with them on this was a pleasure. Our OPM -- Director of OPM, Bob Genuario and his staff worked very hard with us. They were very cooperative, and I think we produced a very good work product in the bill before us. Our Majority Leader Marty Looney was very helpful with his counsel all throughout the process. And I thank you, Marty.

And I'd really like to thank President Pro Tem Don Williams, who side by side, working with him on this for many hours, I spoke to him nearly every single day since we began this process working on this bill. He and Speaker Donovan were a tremendous help in working on the issues and the agreements that were necessary to have the bill before us today, Mr. President.

Mr. President and members of the circle, the first sections of the bill relate to school construction. It has the annual priority list of school construction projects. It also has some other school construction projects that needed some

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assistance in the so-called "notwithstanding sections." I'll point out that those additions primarily are procedural and technical changes as opposed to past years where that list could have several million dollars' worth of changes. This is limited to just about to \$2.7 million, the lowest list that I have seen in a long time.

The total bill amounts to about \$677 million in school construction. That's important for our state, for our schoolchildren and teachers, administrators that work in those schools. It's also important for our economy here in Connecticut because these projects provide a great deal of jobs, good paying construction jobs for people in the state of Connecticut. So those are in the first five sections of the bill. One section that I thought that was very important, Section 3, limits the change orders on these projects. For far too long, districts have come in with change orders that quite frankly were excessive. This bill limits change orders to 5 percent of the total project costs for those school construction projects that are greater than \$10 million in cost.

Section 18, getting on to the magnet sections of the bill, we are transferring a prior authorized grant

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commitment from Hartford for the New Pathways Magnet School over to Goodwin College in East Hartford on their campus. They also add a new early childhood magnet facility. Both projects are funded with transfers from a previously authorized magnet school.

Sections 22 through 24 are the magnet school per-pupil operating grants, which are capped at the 2009 levels. Except for the Hartford grants that we have for the Hartford host magnet schools, for the students that are coming into Hartford from other towns, their per-pupil grant will rise from \$6700 to \$12,000. That's less than the 13,054 that the District of Hartford requested. However, I can tell each and every one of you that the 12,000 should be more than ample for -- to handle the costs of the students coming into the Hartford magnet schools.

I personally looked at each and every budget of the magnet schools in Hartford. And they will be able to, I believe, meet this per-pupil operating number. The RESC operating grant for students that come in and attend the magnet schools run by Capital Region Education Council will rise from 6700 to \$9,695 in the next year and the transportation grant will rise from \$1300 to \$1400. And in the second year, it goes to

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\$2,000.

We have to keep in mind that we are operating under a court order, under the Sheff versus O'Neill court order for the Hartford host magnet schools, the RESC magnet schools in the area were under court order to have a far more diverse makeup of our schools in the Sheff region. There are certain benchmarks that the state Department of Education has to meet, 19 percent was just met. Their next benchmark of 28 percent is due to be met, and they're just now reviewing the statistics in the Hartford magnet schools to see how they're doing as far as meeting that next benchmark.

Section 23 is a 2000 transportation grant for students attending RESCs -- I'm sorry, Prince Tech in Hartford from the outlying towns within the Sheff region. And the Sheff magnet schools will now have to participate -- have participation agreements. Students will be selected per lottery according to the bill.

There is a lot of transfer language within the bill regarding appropriated amounts to match up with the budget. There's a section on the new team program, which will replace the BEST program. The

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BEST program was actually nationally renowned in evaluating and monitoring teacher performance. We now will have a new program that will do away with the videotaping of the teacher. It will be much more of a portfolio review. There's quite a bit of language on that.

There's grant cap language to match up with the budget in Sections 40 through 47. Section 48 has language that puts off a requirement that substitute teachers have a bachelor -- have at least a bachelor's degree -- puts that off until July 1, 2010.

And there's also language in here that -- in the bill that delays the implementation of the in-school suspension until July 1, 2010. A couple notes on that, having heard quite a bit of testimony at the hearing. It's a bit disturbing, the amount of the misinformation that was distributed with regard to the in-school suspension requirement. There's a very wide berth in the statute for school districts to still allow for out-of-school suspensions.

You did not have to have a certified teacher in the room, for instance. There was some very innovative in-school suspension programs. I can think of Berlin, for instance; they hired a former probation

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officer. He is a big hit with the children at that school -- at that high school, at Berlin High. They have an excellent program that's been going on for the past couple of years. Cromwell hired a former director of the YMCA for their in-school suspension program. They have what amounts to be a nationally recognized in-school suspension program. They're just going to be -- have an article published in one of the education -- national education magazines of their program.

So the -- some of the information that was bandied about with regard to in-school suspension really was not accurate. And it's a good thing for kids to keep them in school, rather than have them out of school. Statistics were overwhelmingly telling us that when students are sent home or out of school for suspension, they get into trouble when they have more idle time. And when we talk about costs -- we have to think about costs in a holistic perspective, not just the cost of keeping students in school, but the real cost when they're out of school and they get in trouble and then they're in the juvenile justice system or worse. And the cost for that is enormous.

And the last couple sections relate to a law that

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allows 16-year-olds to drop out of school if they have parental consent beginning in FY -- 11 July -- I'm sorry, not FY11, July 1, 2011, 16-year-olds will no longer be able to drop out of high school, again, another measure trying to reduce the dropout rate, keep more students in school, and continue their education throughout high school. And, Mr. President, that is a brief summary of the bill before us. I'd be glad to entertain any questions, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on Senate Bill 2053?

Senator Caligiuri.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, Mr. President.

If I may, I have a question, through you to Senator Gaffey.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Section 4 of the bill, Senator Gaffey, deals with duplicative school projects, and it gives the commissioner the authority to reject an application

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for a project that's duplicative of -- just through you, Mr. President, the question is does this apply -- would this apply to an existing project that's currently in the works? And what's this designed to get at, and didn't the commissioner have this authority to some extent already? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Any time.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Senator Caligiuri.

Through you, Mr. President, this would not apply to any school that is up and running today. Whether the commissioner had authority or not -- he didn't have explicit authority. This makes it explicit. We're trying to avoid having schools in the same district or, you know, adjoining towns to have the exact same theme, exact same offerings. And that's what this language is intended to get at. With that, it makes me remember also one thing I neglected to say

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during my summary is that we're going to take a pause on interdistrict magnet schools outside of the Sheff region, have the commissioner come back to us in 2011, the first of the year, and report to us what he thinks the needs are, vis-a-vis curriculum needs, what types of themes are needed in magnet schools throughout Connecticut. It doesn't apply to the Sheff magnet schools. It only applies to the magnet schools that people seek to develop outside of the Sheff region. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Caligiuri.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I thank Senator Gaffey for that response, and if I could just elaborate just a little bit more. I can think of one situation, through you, Mr. President to Senator Gaffey, where there were some discussions between a school district and the commissioner about a project in the pipeline that was arguably duplicative of an existing vocational technical school. Through conversations, it was decided that there were enough differences that the project would be allowed to continue, and I just want to make sure that this

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legislation wouldn't upend any agreements to that effect that the commissioner has been involved in.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

For the purpose of legislative intent, through you, Mr. President, I think it's only fair that if there's been discussions going -- ongoing, if there are agreements between the commissioner and a particular school district -- I think I know which one you're talking about -- but it's only fair that that school allowed -- be allowed to go forward. Through you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Senator Caligiuri.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, Mr. President. I thank Senator Gaffey for those responses. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark further?

Senator Kissel.

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SENATOR KISSEL:

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Just a couple questions, through you, to the
proponent.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Thank you very much.

Well, all politics is local, and in July it was
an occasion where I was going to church,
St. Adalbert's church to listen to another great
sermon by Father Edmund O'Brien, and on the way out --
it was a Saturday afternoon -- a woman stopped me on
the stairs. And she goes what did you guys do when
you passed that piece of legislation?

Well, as anybody here in the circle knows, you
have to follow up and ask them what piece of
legislation did I vote on and what exactly affected
you. And she was a very nice woman, and she said I
have been a substitute teacher in the Enfield public
school system for -- and I think she said something
like 23 years. And she's highly respected, and she's
done a wonderful job, but she doesn't have a
bachelor's degree. And she said did you know that it

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was in that bill that I can't go back and be a substitute teacher. And I said to be very honest, we try to go through the bills as closely as possible, but if that's indeed what was in the bill, I can't imagine why we can't come up with a way to try to revisit that hopefully or maybe grandfather folks like you in.

In reviewing initial proposals regarding this, just a few hours ago, I was informed that there was a carve-out for folks that may not have received their bachelor's degrees, whereas they could go in for this school year and substitute teach for ten days, but no more. As Senator Gaffey explained the bill just now, it appears that we're just pushing out this entire requirement to July 1, 2010, which would actually address my constituents' concerns far more, and maybe we could revisit that language going forward to try to figure out a way to grandfather people in that have performed very valuable services for a school system, have no bad marks against their record. And, indeed, I know that in talking to superintendents and principals within the Seventh Senatorial District, they're always looking for people that will be good substitute teachers that have a proven track record.

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So I'm a little confused by this. I'm hoping that the way Senator Gaffey explained it is the way that it is going forward, but that's my question through you, Mr. President. Is it pushed out until 2010, July 1, or do they just have 10 days that they can do it. Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Through you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Kissel, so I can expound upon this further. They do have ten days. If you don't have a bachelor's degree, you can substitute teach for ten days in a particular assignment. There are other particular assignments that they most likely would be called upon to go in and substitute teach than the one that they happened to be in for the first ten days. Say they were substitute teaching today. They could be called back for another particular assignment and substitute teach for ten days in that assignment.

We really are trying to get away from a long-term substitute that doesn't have a bachelor's degree. That, I mean, that would just not be appropriate for a minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree for

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someone to be in front of a classroom over a long period of time. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Thank you very much.

So to sort of clarify, is this a change that will be in effect until July 1, 2010. And it's my understanding that the way school systems work is, for example, someone, a teacher had a baby; she wants to take two months off to begin rearing that child.

She's out for that period of time. Typically, the superintendent or the principal will seek a substitute to take that class for that entire two-month period. Someone who doesn't have a bachelor's degree probably couldn't get that assignment. Whereas if someone was out sick in one school, a substitute is called in to take over for that classroom because a person is out one or two days, that falls within the catchall provisions, and then that individual would be able to be called in throughout this school year for various short-term assignments. Is that my -- is that a correct sort of interpretation of what we're doing here with this proposal? Through you, Mr. President.

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THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Yes, Mr. President. I believe that's accurate. Just to be clear, though, state law doesn't allow anyone to substitute teach for longer than 40 days unless they have a permit. So they'd have to have a bachelor's degree and fulfill those qualifications.

You're right. Though, this would be short-term duration, ten days or less of substitute teaching for a particular assignment, and they could be then called going to another assignment after that ten days or for further down the road. Through you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Okay. And so, not to belabor this point, but just because I know there was more than one constituent. There was -- this was the first constituent this summer that brought it to my attention. The various other folks in the greater Enfield area wanted to be clear on this as well. It sounds to me that what we're trying to do here, through this language, is whatever rules were

applicable to this woman that had spoken to me in July, in the past, would still apply to her going forward for this school year provided that none of her assignments are long-term in duration. And that after July 1, 2010, unless we, as a Legislature, revisit this in the next legislative session, beginning in February -- and by the way, if there is a way to maybe grandfather some of these folks with the ultimate goal of getting bachelor's degrees to everyone, you know, being sort of sympathetic to folks that have been doing this for a better part of decades, maybe we can discuss that later on next year.

But it sounds to me that I will have good news for these folks that should this bill pass, that these people essentially are grandfathered for this school year and with the ultimate, sort of, notion being, we are sending a message out to the public as a whole, our ultimate goal is to have all substitutes have at least a bachelor's degree or the equivalent moving forward, especially after July 1, 2010, unless we change something else in the meantime. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

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SENATOR GAFFEY:

Mr. President, I believe that that is accurate.

Just as a note, under No Child Left Behind the federal -- the biggest federal mandate the states have ever been hit with in education -- we have a requirement for highly qualified teachers to be in front of the classroom. And that drives a lot of this. So --

But your explanation, I think, is correct. For short-term assignments, your constituent, as you described the hypothetical, would be able to continue to substitute teach.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Thank you very much. And one last -- to just to -- cross the T and dot the I, and should we pass this, what would she be able to go into the superintendent and be able to do this? When is this effective from? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Mr. President, through you, that would be

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effective upon passage, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Thank you very much.

I want to extend my thanks to all those that worked on this particular provision. It may not seem like an awful lot in the context of the overall bill, but I know an awful lot of people in North Central Connecticut that have been involved in education in their capacity as substitute teachers that may have felt that they were somehow forgotten or knocked out without a lot of notice. They're going to feel that they go back and participate and at least have enough time to maybe plan accordingly.

Also, it would be remiss of me if I didn't say that amidst all of my praise for Senator Gaffey, we do have a fundamental difference when it comes to in house -- in-school detention and suspension rather. I know that I heard from my superintendents and principals without an exception in North Central Connecticut that they, in some instances may want to move forward along that path, but they may want the ability to make that decision on their own. I have no

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doubts that when we look at certain school environments, and in particular, urban environments, that putting young people out onto the street so to speak, especially if there's no one that really cares for them at home, may pose more problems in its entirety.

And I agree with Senator Gaffey that in some of these instances we do have to look at it holistically from a societal perspective. Nonetheless, all politics is local. The seven towns that I represent in North Central Connecticut have spoken with one voice regarding that particular provision. And for that reform being moved over to July 1, 2010, I think that those who spoke out in unison in opposition, I think they deserve an awful lot of credit.

Again, I am hopeful that we can revisit that issue, maybe to get to where Senator Gaffey ultimately wants to go, but also giving enough latitude to municipalities so that they can make their own decisions based upon their school group makeups and the will of their communities.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further?

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Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR McLACHLAN:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And through you to Senator Gaffey, questions about the proposed bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR McLACHLAN:

Senator Gaffey, the issue of in-school suspension being postponed now through 2010, could you just clarify what was the thinking in why in a biennium budget we didn't entertain the idea of pushing it out for two years which is the term of this budget.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Through you, Mr. President, it was first passed a couple of years ago -- and after a long hearing on the matter. And we decided to put off the implementation until this July of 2009. As a matter-of-fact, there was an agreement that it would be put off until this July. The superintendent's association, CABE, the

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unions, everybody was around the table when this agreement was made. And then we heard the complaints this session from superintendents and CAGE, mainly, that they needed to delay it further.

I'm not happy about that. I'm, you know, of the opinion that we are better off with kids in school than out of school. And -- but nonetheless, I agreed to delay it another year. I think that, as I said before, the real cost of this is not doing it -- not doing it. When I look at the urban areas where we had virtually no complaints coming from school districts, at least that came to my attention from urban areas -- it was primarily from smaller school districts. I mentioned two at the outset of my explanation, Cromwell and Berlin, that have done an outstanding job with in-school suspension and have done so for quite some time now and.

But with regard to the relationship of the biennial budget, there's no additional funds flowing to the districts by virtue of the in-school suspension law. So not a direct relationship between the biennial budget and the in-school suspension law at all.

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Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR McLACHLAN:

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for your answers, Senator Gaffey.

I have a philosophical disagreement with you on the value of in-school suspension. I think that my gravest concern is that of another unfunded mandate of this General Assembly on local municipalities.

You've raised in your Education Committee and in your presentation today some valid points about the reasons for it, and I understand that. However, given this economy now, I don't think that it makes sense for us to be adding new programs that aren't fully funded.

Here's my concern in Danbury -- in Danbury the superintendent of schools informs me that upwards of 200 students are affected by the in-school suspension proposal here. And we're looking at a fairly substantial investment on the part of the Danbury school system to facilitate this program. And if you're looking at traditional school funding costs in the city of Danbury of \$12,000 per student per year for traditional funding. And now you're basically hiring a retired probation officer to basically just

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sit and keep an eye on the kids.

I think that that's not conducive to the children receiving a fair education when you're claiming that the whole idea is to keep them in school and to keep them out of trouble. And yet, the cost of this program is so burdensome to the municipality. So in Danbury, the cost to run this program for 200 students is a big number, and a number that in this economy and in this budget crisis, they can ill afford to take on.

I am grateful, though, that you've agreed to do a one-year suspension of this requirement. However, I do believe that this issue should be revisited again very soon, as I think we're going to find that the same objections that you've heard in the last several months since it was passed that you're going to be asked for an additional extension, and I hope that this legislative body will consider that.

I'm also grateful for your work on bringing back to us school construction, that the moratorium has been lifted. I'm especially grateful because we have a brand new elementary school in the city of Danbury known as the Ellsworth Avenue Elementary School, which opened proudly for classes this year. This school was waiting for \$3.2 million in state funding, even though

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the school was open and that was left hanging. And we have a new Headstart facility in Danbury that was waiting for nearly \$800,000, and now that funding under this implementor is in place.

So I'm grateful for that. And I hope that we don't have to plan in such a somewhat dysfunctional way for state funding. It is assumed that if a municipality is given funding for a particular project, whether it be school construction or bridge construction, as we've had problems with bridge construction money in the past, that this Legislature will honor those commitments. And so today, I am grateful that these items are included for the city of Danbury and for -- obviously for other municipalities that this Legislature is lifting the important -- lifting the moratorium on school construction and honoring their commitments. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator McLachlan.

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President.

First of all, Mr. President, I would like to thank the Chair of the Education Committee for not inserting Super 7 highway language into this bill so

that we can move expeditiously along today's deliberations. That's much appreciated, having had to move my office (inaudible) on several occasions.

I do, though, want to ask a question, through you if I may, regarding the change that appears in our ability for 16-year-olds and 17-year-olds to drop out of school. Through you, Mr. President to the Chair of the Education Committee, it was my understanding that our current law states that you may not drop out of school unless you have parental permission or sign-off from the parents and that this change would actually make it easier for a 16-year-old to drop out of school. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And before I respond to Senator Boucher's question, I would just like to make it clear for the record, after listening to Senator McLachlan's statements, there was never any language on a school construction moratorium in any bill we have passed this session. In fact, there was never ever any legislative intent on the floor in the House or

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Senate. So this notion of a school construction moratorium is just false. It didn't exist. It's never existed, and we were -- we were fully inclined to proceed with the priority list that's before you today in the bill.

With regard to Senator Boucher's question of the current law, but as you know Senator -- through you, Mr. President, current law, as you know, Senator, allows a 16-year-old to drop out of school if they have the consent of their parent or guardian. This new language would disallow that process. In fact, a 16-year-old would not be able to drop out as of July 1, 2011, at all. So it's doing away with the process of allowing a 16-year-old to drop out if, in fact, a parent or guardian consented. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Mr. President, I am greatly relieved to hear the explanation by the Chairman of the Education Committee. So to be clear then, you would have to be 17 or older with parental permission -- or without parental permission to drop out of school in

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Connecticut?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Through you, that is absolutely correct, Senator.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Again, Mr. President, I am greatly relieved to hear that. I think it's very important that we do everything we can to keep our students in school for as long as possible.

On the subject of in-school suspension, for all of the discourse we've had on this subject, it is convincing that it would be ideal if we could have students stay in an academic environment through a suspension if that's possible, but unfortunately this does represent one of the more clear unfunded mandates that the state can move onto its towns and cities.

As the good Senator from the Danbury area explained, the hardship it would be for a city -- I also had seven communities that all uniformly expressed a great deal of concern about this

legislation. And to a person on boards and commissions, boards of education, boards of finance, first selectman's offices -- this was at the top of their list of unfunded mandates that they could not absorb, particularly in these economic times.

And I did hear carefully the remarks by the Chairman about how this has been delayed so often before, but it is clear that we have to finally get a reality check in this Chamber and in the House about how dire and how different these economic times -- and it is not like other years. It is not like other years. And yet, we seem to function as if it were many times and on many issues.

But this clearly is a time when an issue like this, without state fundings accommodating and going along with them, just cannot be absorbed by all of the towns and cities that we all represent when they have had such a difficult time meeting their budget deadlines, trying to cut costs in so many different ways, and unheard-of layoffs that have taken place at a lot of these communities, that this would add a great deal more burden on them.

And like my good colleague, I also believe that it should have been extended for a two-year period

because in no one's view, at least in our part of the woods, no one's view that we are going to be getting out of this in the next month or two. If anything, this recession seems to be continuing, if not double-dipping again, as we look at our revenue numbers being reduced and our taxes being reduced as well.

So I do support the fact that we are delaying it for another year. It should be more than one year. It is answering the call of, as I said, an unprecedented chorus, both on the Republican and Democratic administrations from our communities in our region, that this one -- is one of their top two largest unfunded mandates that they cannot absorb in these economic times.

So it is a wise maneuver. It's enough for me to vote on this particular bill just for that mandate relief. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, ma'am.

Will you remark further? Senator Prague.

SENATOR PRAGUE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I'm coming from a different point

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of view than the previous speakers on the in-school suspension. As a former schoolteacher, I firmly believe that in-school suspension is a much better way of with dealing with kids who are troubled, who are causing trouble, who need that extra time. To send them home where there may not be any supervision, to send them home to a situation where they may be free to run the streets, to send them home where they won't be getting any kind of academic information, I think, is a travesty.

The in-school suspension minimally sends kids to an area with assigned work that has to be completed, and that is a much better academic situation than sending kids home where God knows what could happen, whether they get into trouble, whether they sit and watch television, whether they're running the streets.

We owe it to our students to make sure that we provide them with the best opportunities and have a system that is concerned with their needs. You know, Mr. President, if a student is suspended for longer than ten days he's considered, quote, expelled, and we have to -- the town he lives in has to provide for tutors, which is much more expensive than having in-school suspension.

That's something that we as legislators need to think about. If kids are going to be suspended and suspended and finally they have to be expelled, it's going to cost the towns a lot more money than just having a room where kids can be completing their assignment in school under supervision of an adult.

For one, I think it's bad public policy not to have in-school suspension. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Prague.

Senator Debicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise today to support this implementor, which corrects what I believe were some serious errors in the budget that was passed three weeks ago. First and foremost, I think there's been a bipartisan commitment throughout this budget process not to cut education funding, whether that was in the ECS formula or whether it was with school construction.

And the original budget we passed did not have the debt service requirements in it to actually fund the school construction grants for this year. And I'm

glad to see that the majority has agreed to reinstate in another implementor that debt service and here to actually pass the school construction grants that were recommended this year. So I really believe that Section 1 of this bill, in and of itself, is a major victory for the children of Connecticut.

But also, Mr. President, we could debate the merits of the in-school suspension, and I have no doubt that we will continue to over the course of the next year, but I think it's a wise policy decision to delay the implementation, to continue to explore the issue.

You know, I represent a district that has larger towns like Stratford and smaller towns like Monroe. And I can tell you that the impact of this is different depending on the size of the community. Smaller towns like Monroe are absolutely aghast at these types of mandates because they simply don't have the volume of students who are suspended to actually necessitate any form of an incremental expenditure, whereas towns like Stratford, which are larger, may find this useful.

I've been against mandates in general because that one-size-fits-all policy does not work. So I

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think that Senator Gaffey and the majority are wise to actually delay the implementation of this.

Hopefully -- my hope is eventually we will repeal it, but I believe this delay is wise for this year.

So Mr. President, for those reasons I stand in support of this budget implementor and urge its adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further?

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. And good afternoon to you.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, ma'am.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

I, first of all, rise to recognize the incredible work that has gone into all the implementors, not the least of which is the education implementor, which is always so crucial, education being certainly a priority of this Chamber and the state of Connecticut.

And if I might, for the purposes of understanding and perhaps legislative intent, refer to a specific section in the implementor. I harken back to, quite

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frankly, my tenure on the Higher Education Committee, and at that time, in '07, we inaugurated a program called the "Compact School Program," which was a research based program to allow schools, superintendents and principals to deal with their individual schools from the bottom up, from the grassroots up to bring parents, community --

(Gap in tape.)

-- through, as I recall, the University of Connecticut, the NEAG School of Education. That program is in this budget which is, I think, a great accomplishment in terms of the value, and quite frankly, the preventative issues that it has made in many of our urban school districts.

However, if I might pose a question to the proponent in terms of clarification. The line item refers to \$712,500 on the compact schools, but there is not any associated language to talk about how that will be spent. And I ask that question, because in the previous biennium there appeared an addendum, if you will, which took, I believe, a \$250,000 line item out of the original line item for the compact schools. So my question is, is this line item that appears at the compact schools for -- indeed for the Compact

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School Program as we know it?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Mr. President, my understanding on this was that the agreement that was in place the last time with UConn and NEAG getting, I think, two-thirds of the money and CSU getting one-third of the money for their program still stands. That's my interpretation of this. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

And thank you, and thank you, Senator Gaffey.

So because that is not delineated anywhere in this implementor, that -- that is instructive.

Although my question would be what is it that the university program does with respect to the compact program?

I have -- I know there's a report that is pending which we have not seen, but I just don't understand how that works with the NEAG program.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

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SENATOR GAFFEY:

Not being the Chair of Higher Ed, I'll take my best shot at it. My recollection was that NEAG would be getting two-thirds of the dollars for their program vis-a-vis Compact Schools. And CSU had a program entitled the "Bridge Program," I believe, at Western, if I recall correctly, and one-third of the dollars through that appropriation would be going to them. That's my recollection on it, Mr. Chairman -- Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you.

And I guess the reason for my questions is because clearly, as I was reading through this and asking questions, the recollection was that that was going to be a one time, that the intention was that that was clearly going to be a one-time event. And without language attached to the description of the existing compact school, it leave -- it begs the question -- but I guess it was, in terms of everyone's understanding, the last time this program was done, that that was to be a one-time event.

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THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Mr. President, I'm not aware of that being the case at all. I'm just giving you my recollection of what transpired in the last -- the last time we put the language forth on the split of that appropriation. Through you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Thank you, Senator Gaffey. One last question if I might. Senator Gaffey, do you have any indication of what, in fact, was done then over the last biennium in view of the fact that this report is imminent and is to be out very shortly?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Through you, Mr. President, I think that's a question for the Chair of the Higher Ed Committee. Again, and I'm not the chairman of that committee. That report doesn't come to me, so therefore I really

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can't answer the question. Through you, Mr.
President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I just would like to note that initially when the program was put into effect -- that was the compact program -- it was for \$750,000. With this change that happened in the last biennium implementor with the 250 being less, the program then went and secured private funds to make up the difference on the program. Of course knowing what that is like when we're securing federal dollars in the like and private dollars which aren't long-lasting, they, the program is now -- it appears to be with the start of 12 schools throughout the state to be about a quarter of a million dollars shy because those previous sources that they used to make this up were -- are no longer in existence. That was the nature of my question.

So I thank you. I thank the chairman of Higher Education, and I look forward to the continuing of this program which has made such an incredible difference in our school systems and in -- in

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particular, in our urban school systems. And we're talking about the suspension issues. These are the kinds of things that prevent those suspension issues from even coming to the forefront.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Hartley.

Senator Gomes.

SENATOR GOMES:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise in favor of in-school suspension. And I felt like I would be remiss if I didn't speak on it because of an incident that happened in Bridgeport recently.

In-school suspension, I do not agree with the fact that some -- that was stated earlier that this is a program just to keep an eye on kids who are disruptive. First of all, what a better opportunity to have a legitimized truancy for a kid that acts up in classes, just so he can be thrown out on the streets to do what he wants to do.

Just recently, in Bridgeport, they busted a group of kids, 15 to 20 kids, aged 12 to 15, who were burglarizing peoples houses in the daytime. And I

know of one particular because it was right next door, 11 o'clock in the morning, they burglarized the house.

These were kids that were under suspension out of the school running the streets doing what they wanted with the supervision of a 27-year-old woman. So I know that they talk about the cost of this programs, but believe it or not, you will pay it now or you will pay it later.

There is no need for children to be out on the street when they should be in school. They have mothers that work all day long that want to have their children in a secured area learning something rather than running the streets.

I've heard that unfunded mandate over and over again, but the thing of it is, if we have to pay some money for something to be done in response to children who are unruly and ineffectively out in the streets doing what they want as opposed to being at the school learning something, then I think the money is well spent rather than putting it off into another year.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further?

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Senator Guglielmo.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Just a question to the proponent of the
legislation.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Gaffey, just a quick question, and it may
be redundant. I was out of the chamber and might have
not got a complete explanation of the substitute
teacher degree, and I apologize, but I wanted to make
sure I understood it. The way I understand it is that
you can have a nondegree teacher for seven to ten
days, but no longer than that. There is no longer
discretion for the commissioner of education to grant
a waiver.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Through you, Mr. President, a person that does
not hold a bachelor's degree may substitute teach for

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up to ten days in a particular assignment.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Okay.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

After those ten days they could be eligible to substitute teach for another particular assignment.

The goal has been to get away from the process of waivers for substitutes that are in the classroom for longer periods of time.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Guglielmo.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Thank you. Thank you, Senator Gaffey.

I understand the goal, and I actually agree with the goal. I am a little concerned, though, about our more rural towns. We have trouble getting substitute teachers with four-year degrees. Maybe with a recession it's a little easier. Part of it, of course is that we don't pay a lot. I mean you pay 70, 80 -- dollars a day, \$8 an hour, so that's certainly part of the problem.

But when you get a town like one of the towns that I represent, the median income is \$53,000 a year. You have a lot of kids who, in other towns, would be

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able to go to a four-year college, but simply can't afford it so they'll go to a two-year college. And then those are the ones who later on, would -- might marry and become substitute teachers. You'll have somebody with a two-year degree and not a four-year degree. So that does concern me a little bit, and we're trying to work a little bit on an amendment.

Thank you, Senator Gaffey. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on Senate Bill 2053?

Senator Frantz.

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I am standing in favor of the proposed bill in front of us, however just a couple of comments about in-school suspension and the language that is proposed here to extend it by only one year.

Numerous times during the legislative session, earlier this year, we had members of town councils and RTMs and first selectmen and mayors and the like come up, literally, physically to the capitol to express their -- this belief that, in fact, this was going to,

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in fact, go through and become, in essence, what we all know is that unfunded mandate going forward. And I think that raised some really good points. We've been getting an earful of this back in our districts, in Southwestern Connecticut, in particular, and I'm sure in other parts of the state as well and they do raise some very good points because it is, in fact, an unfunded mandate.

It's a policy that when it does go into effect, if it does go into effect, is one that really doesn't fit every municipality and every town within the state of Connecticut. It's something that I think we should probably revisit at some point before it does go into effect to make sure that we are not doing the best thing for the state.

I agree with Senator Gomes. I agree with Senator Prague. It probably is, on balance, a better situation to have professional in-school, in-house supervision, as well as educational oriented people to watch children who are in -- under suspension in school.

So I think it's a great idea; however, everything comes with a price tag. I'm not sure that every town, every municipality needs that. They may have a better

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idea of how to deal with that particular set of situations, and I think we need to have some more hearings on that because it is, in fact, not a situation where one size fits all throughout the state of Connecticut.

So I look forward to debating that again in the future, and hopefully we will get that chance. I'm also -- I'm very, very happy and gratified to see that the money for the school construction is back into the bill here. It may not have been a moratorium, but there was certainly enough concern with the way that the previous budget bill was written that there was an outcry in various parts of the state of Connecticut that, in fact, maybe that money may not be coming. And whether we -- it's semantics really whether we call it a moratorium or whether we want to call it or just maybe just let it rest in obfuscation to the point where no one really knows what's going on. It's good to see it back in the bill here today. So Senator Gaffey, I do appreciate that, your putting it back in as well as the committee and everybody else who worked on the bill. I'll be voting in favor of it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise to just clarify some things about in-school suspension. You know, we've heard time and time again, as this has been discussed, that in-school suspension is an unfunded mandate. The reality is that it is not an unfunded mandate. It would -- it was passed in 2007 with an accompanying \$200 million increase to ECS that goes to all of the communities, educational communities throughout our state. So we pass that with the understanding that we would have different requirements, higher requirements for our local educational authorities.

So \$200 million does not sound like an unfunded mandate to me. And what is really very disconcerting is the local educational authorities said, okay, fine. Give us the money. We'll take it, but, you know, we're not quite ready yet to implement the in-school suspension, and we said okay. Fine. We'll wait until 2008. 2008 came. Now, in the meantime, they have had the money. We suddenly start hearing it's an unfunded

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mandate. It's an unfunded mandate because they asked not to spend the money on what we asked them to spend the money on. And so as a result, we continue to hear this cacophony of unfunded mandate, when we've given as a state \$200 million that should be used for that. Now, because the municipalities and the local educational authorities chose not to do that, was not this General Assembly's problem, but it was our intent that they use those dollars to make sure that kids stay in school.

And why did we want to do that? Because we learned something that we've been learning, the neural science. And many of you, if you could -- if you get Governing magazine, you can read an article that really tells you that when you have teenagers who are not quite developed from a neural point of view, and you give them the option of coming together with their friends -- because what do adolescents do, they like to bond with their peer group. We all know that and all they have to do is act up in school and they get an opportunity to go out and act up with their kids. And you know, you want to say that it's an unfunded mandate. Well, we gave our local educational authorities the money. But one of the things that we

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don't ever take into consideration is the cost for the whole community when these young people who understand that all they have to do is act up in school can get together with other kids in the community who act up in school.

And I want to tell you I've seen what happens. I would leave my house at 9:00 o'clock in the morning, way past time for kids to be in school, and I'd see little groups of young men, who should have been in school, roaming. And sometimes they do just little things like vandalize cars on streets. I watch them vandalize the cars on my street. Sometimes they just snap off the antennas on cars. Sometimes they break into houses, but the reality is we are enablers. Our local educational authorities are enablers because these children need to be in school. And one of the reasons that they need to be in school is a whole other reason that we don't have enough people in the next 20 years to take over for the older people who would be retiring. We can't afford to loose one of these kids. That's why we put money in our educational cost-sharing to make -- ensure that there would be a way to adequately educate all of the children of Connecticut.

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So this business about this being an unfunded mandate is just not true. And the reality is they just don't want to spend the money on this, but I submit to you it's very important. And I'm hoping that we will have the will to hold these local educational authorities accountable for the \$200 million that we've given them and that they will educate all of the kids, even those who are difficult to educate. It's in our interest that they do that. It's for the future of our state that we don't leave any of these children behind, even the ones that have some difficulty sitting in a seat and may act up. But let's not give them an excuse to act up so they can go out and play with their friends and do more damage that we typically don't cost out.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further on Senate Bill 2053?

Senator Guglielmo, for the second time.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I'd like to call an amendment, Mr. President, LCO 9967.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

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Will the Senate stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will come back to order.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO 9967, which will be designated Senate
Amendment Schedule "A" is offered by Senator Guglielmo
of the 35th District.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Guglielmo.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I move the amendment and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

The motion for amendment to summarization.

Without objection, please proceed, sir.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Yeah. Just briefly, it really was, in essence,
the questions that I asked Senator Gaffey about the
substitute teaching.

I represent 13 towns. A lot of them smaller
rural towns, not very wealthy. I mentioned one of
them in my brief remarks before. This would allow the

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commissioner of education, for a good cause, to allow communities of under 30,000 residents to still have substitutes that do not have the four-year degree for a longer period than the ten days.

The reason that I've asked for this is that what -- that I mentioned before that, we have difficulty in small towns getting substitute teachers. You take down like Union, Connecticut. What does that represent? 670 people. Very tough to get substitutes. Some of the towns that are a little larger, actually have more trouble. Towns like Hampton, 2,000, Chaplin, 2,000. They're off the beaten track. You're not going to get somebody to go up and substitute from a neighboring town because it's going to be a 30 minute ride. So most of the substitutes come from within a community.

So I'm just afraid that this is going to have some unintended consequences, and I'm hoping, with this amendment, to correct those. And I would urge your support. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Guglielmo.

Senator Guglielmo, we are going to stand at ease. I'm understanding that only the first page of a

two-page amendment has been distributed. So until we get all the secondary pages out, we'll stand at ease. Thank you.

(Chamber at ease.)

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will come back to order.

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, unfortunately I have to rise to oppose the amendment. With that said, though, I'm sure we'll be revisiting this issue in the short session of the Legislature commencing in February. But I'll have to oppose this now because the regulations in Connecticut are clear, requiring long-term substitutes, and I'm afraid that this language may trespass on that. So with that -- for that reason I will ask the Senate to oppose the amendment and ask for a roll call vote. Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further? Will you remark further on Senate Amendment "A"?

Senator Frantz.

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SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Briefly, I would like to weigh in on this and just for the record say that I do like the amendment, on principle if not necessarily in detail. Although I think it does have merit and should be voted upon favorably, I think the concept of being a little more flexible with the different regions and different municipalities and towns within the borders of the state of Connecticut is something that we should all be paying attention to. It's not a huge state, but it doesn't make us all homogenous here within the state at the municipal level, individually or familywise. And I think when we try to come up with policies and new bills and laws that will try to benefit the maximum number of people within Connecticut, I think sometimes we do step on smaller towns. Sometimes we do step on bigger municipalities.

So I think we do need to keep this whole concept of being creative and being flexible with respect to some of these different conditions that we place upon the different areas within Connecticut. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

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Thank you, Senator Frantz.

Will you remark?

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise in strong support of the amendment and for me to question isn't what -- what the desirability of having people with bachelor's degrees in as a substitute teachers. I like to have people with PhDs as a substitute teachers. The question is to what extent are we in the best position to dictate to our school systems the manner in which they staff substitute teachers.

And as Senator Guglielmo appropriately pointed out, particularly in smaller towns, they have a hard time getting a warm body into the classroom. And when we raise the bar, we are going to create havoc in some districts, and we're going to drive up the costs of education, and I'm not sure that the cost-benefit analysis that our local boards of educations will perform is the same cost-benefit analysis that we go through up here. And there comes a time when we ought to defer to local people on the ground to enable them to do the cost-benefit analysis, and we should respect

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their wishes.

And for that reason I'll be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on Senate Amendment "A"?
Will you remark further? If not, Mr. Clerk, please call for a roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? If all Senators have voted, please check your vote. The machine will be locked. The Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

The motion is on adoption of Senate Amendment Schedule "A."

Total number voting	33
Necessary for Adoption	17
Those voting Yea	10

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Those voting Nay 23

Those absent and not voting 3

THE CHAIR:

The amendment fails.

Will you remark further on Senate Bill 2053?

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Just very quickly, I neglected to mention our drafting attorney, Chris Cordima, at the outset, and I'm sorry, Chris. I should have -- he's done an excellent job. He's a brand new drafting attorney for education, and as you can see, some of our language gets to be quite complex. He was a very, very quick study, worked extremely hard, always had drafts in to me first thing in the morning, and just want to, you know, give a shout out to Chris Cordima for doing a great job.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further?

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

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Mr. President, I rise in support of the bill before us and do so with some pride in that in my 11 years here, this issue, education, has always been one that has not been partisan. And in a year where there has been perhaps a greater partisan divide over a budget, I think education issues have remained above that fray. And that's a credit I think to the chairman and all members of this circle.

I did want to mention two issues which I think are positives in this. One is the restoring of the \$7.8 million cut to the school construction debt service, and the other is the continued moratorium on the in-school suspension. Without prolonging that debate, because it is one that does excite many of us in this circle, I do think if you were at home listening that you would be left with a false impression that because of the moratorium and the delay of that law, that no town and city would be allowed to have a policy of in-school suspension. And I know how deeply my friend Senator Gaffey believes in it, but he did talk about he wished kids would be in school. I think Senator Harp and Senator Prague made similar remarks.

Let there be no doubt that every single school

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district in our state can institute a policy of in-school suspension today. They could have done it yesterday. They could have done it ten years ago. They didn't need the state of Connecticut to come in and pass a statewide mandate to say, go ahead and do it. And it's not an issue of money, because we weren't going to fund the money as an unfunded mandate, so they're going to have to pay for it whether they want to do it on their own or they have to do it because of a state law.

So I would certainly encourage those who deeply believe that it is the right policy, go to your Meriden Board of Education, your New Haven Board of Education, your Prague Board of Education, and stand up and say, pass this policy right now. It is the right thing to do for our kids. What frustrates some of us on my side of the aisle, even those who believe it may be the better policy, is that we believe that our local educators, our local board of education members, our local superintendents are better able to make that decision as to what's best for their students in their town than perhaps we are in the state of Connecticut. And that one size simply does not fit all in that what's good for Bridgeport or New

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Haven may not be right for Goshen or Hebron. And that is our frustration over the debate.

In-school suspension may be the right policy and all of our towns should be encouraged to adopt it on their own right now.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further?

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President.

Speaking in support of the bill, would like to commend Senator Gaffey for his extraordinarily conscientious and detailed work in negotiating all of the issues involved in this bill, his cochair as well and all who have worked on this.

One issue I'd like to draw attention to, one of the issues that always requires painstaking analysis is the various notwithstanding projects that are always included in the education implementor bill. This year there was a particularly rigorous approach to justifying those projects. You'll see that the number of notwithstandings is a very small and modest

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number, and I think that that serves us well in these difficult times.

Obviously, there are other issues of this kind that will come forward in the next session, but clearly those that were addressed in this bill are addressed, in a way, because they certainly are legitimate. Certainly because they do meet the traditional definition of something that may have been a relatively minor technical flaw in dealing with a school construction project. So again, that particular issue is one that consumes a great deal of time behind the scenes. We know it's one of great concern to municipalities that want to commend the chairs of the committee for their hard work in that regard. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to support the bill. I also want to thank our education chairman here in the Senate, Senator Tom Gaffey, for his tremendous leadership and for continuing the progress in education, public education

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here in the state of Connecticut in the toughest budget year we have ever had. So Senator Gaffey, thank you for your leadership.

And in terms of one other issue I will touch on in-school suspension we have had extensively here today. I represent a number of small towns. And on the one hand, Senator Gaffey, thank you for that additional year for them to get the message and to prepare for this.

At the same time, I think it's unfair that we would, in some way, discriminate against the small towns and say that, you know what, we're not going to help them move forward and have programs so that youngsters are accountable. And when they do something wrong to the point when they're going to be suspended that we'll allow them to run through their small town unsupervised. Then we'll hold the cities to a different standard, and we'll say, you know, in those larger towns or the cities we'll have programs. If you happen to live in a small town, you're not going to have those programs to hold youngsters accountable.

Because I'm betting that of all the students that get suspended in a year, if just one of them -- if

just one of them gets into trouble, unsupervised, breaks the law, gets involved with drugs, gets arrested, let's start adding up the costs. Add the cost if just one of them goes out there and gets into trouble, maybe victimizes somebody else, commits a crime, breaks into a home. Now, they're on a very treacherous road in terms of their own future, but then think of what they have done to the rest of the community and the costs -- costs -- dollars and cents that are involved there.

If you add those up, I think whatever perceived savings that some town might have by not holding youngsters accountable evaporates. And that's if it's just one child that gets in trouble in the course of a year. I suspect that there could be more than one in many of our towns.

So, Mr. President, for those reasons and many others I support this bill here in front of us. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further on Senate Bill 2053? Will you remark further? If not, Mr. Clerk, please call for a roll call vote. The

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machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? If all Senators have, please check your vote. The machine will be locked. The Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on passage of Emergency Certified Bill 2053.

Total number voting	33
Necessary for Adoption	17
Those voting Yea	32
Those voting Nay	1
Those absent and not voting	3

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President.

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Mr. President, would move for immediate transmittal to the House of Representatives of Emergency Certified Senate Bill 2053.

THE CHAIR:

Motion on the floor for a immediate transmittal to the House. Seeing no objection, so ordered.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I believe the Clerk is now in possession of Senate Agenda Number 2 for today's session.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Mr. President, Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda Number 2 for the September Special Session, dated Friday, October 2, 2009. Copies have been distributed.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I move all items on Senate Agenda

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2009**

**SEPTEMBER
SPECIAL
SESSION**

**VOL.52
PART 36
11307 – 11567**

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill Number 2053, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE PROVISIONS OF THE BUDGET CONCERNING EDUCATION, AUTHORIZING STATE GRANT COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS, AND MAKING CHANGES TO THE STATUTES CONCERNING SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AND OTHER EDUCATION STATUTES; LCO Number 9918, offered by Senator Williams and Representative Donovan.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Chairman of the Education Committee,
Representative Andrew Fleischmann, you have the floor,
sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move
passage of the emergency certified bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on passage of the bill.

Will you remark, sir?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the
measure that is now before us is actually something
that in other years might potentially be two measures.
But we've been completely transparent with all four
caucuses about the fact that this year we're doing it

as one bill, and it is something that we would normally call the school construction bill and then something we would call the education implementor. And today what we have is two -- two -- two great tastes in one.

So first let me start with school construction. This bill includes the school construction list that was presented to the statutory School Construction Committee in January by the State Department of Education. Absolutely no change has been made to that priority list. So if you're one of the communities that has a school that is being -- that is under planning, that was on that list, it is on that list, there is no change. And hopefully that question or concern is answered.

As is the case with school construction bills, there are some "notwithstanding" included after the priority school list that relate to a situation where towns missed a deadline for filing a piece of paper or some other technical matter where there are implications for the town and we could fix them -- and we've done that with some of those "notwithstandings."

Now, switching over to the education implementor piece of the equation. We -- as we always do with

education implementors, we're trying to make our budget work in policy terms. So we've done that. We went and made sure that with the dollars that we had available, plus from some additional dollars that we were able to find, we've got sufficient funding for various magnet schools, various regional educational-run schools, and school transportation.

We, in addition, set up a minimum budget requirement that says essentially, you're getting ECS dollars in the same amount this year as you did last year. And you have to spend those dollars on education, you can't move them to other parts of the budget. Priority school districts are in here in precisely the manner as recommended by the State Department of Education.

I've had a lot of questions about the successor to the BEST Program. That's dealt with here. We have the new TEAM Program. The details of this are the details that were agreed to by all of the parties that worked on creating the successor to the BEST Program. So there's virtually nothing in here that you haven't seen before. It was in a bill that we dealt with during the regular session that didn't quite make it before the deadline, that's what we have here.

We put some grants on education -- I'm sorry -- some caps on education grants that had to be capped based on the budget we enacted. We went and gave greater latitude for the hiring of teachers who don't have bachelor's degrees. So districts will be able to employ substitute teachers without bachelor's degrees, but only in assignments lasting 10 or fewer days.

With great assistance from the Vice Chairman of the Education Committee, Tom Reynolds, we did a reconstitution of our early childhood cabinet that makes it work better, saves us money, and puts us directly in line with what the federal government requires of us under ARRA, which is the federal stimulus bill.

We went and addressed some issues that were raised during session about tracking high school dropout rates. That's a measure that passed this Chamber overwhelmingly, and would have passed the Senate if they hadn't run out of time. It's now passed the Senate today.

We go ahead -- and this is one I get a lot of questions about, and I'm hopeful that everyone will be as pleased as I am -- in-school suspension, we have a good statute that we've written. There were concerns

about municipal implementation during this tough fiscal time, so we have pushed back the implementation date. Instead of it being July 1, '09, it becomes July 1, 2010. I know that had strong support in this Chamber, and the other Chamber, I hope it does today.

And finally, there are various shiftings of dollars among various funds to be able to make all of the policies I've just described effective. With that, Mr. Speaker, I hope the entire Chamber will -- will join me in supporting this important measure. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.
Care to remark further?
Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some questions, through you, to the Chairman of the Education Committee.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please --

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please go ahead, Representative.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the "notwithstanding" language, through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm noticing 16 requests. Is 16 the total number of requests for "notwithstanding"? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no. The list was far, far longer.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, the process for selecting items for this list of "notwithstandings"? Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, given the very tough fiscal times that we were in, we essentially created a filter where the question was, is this purely technical relating to a school district having missed

a deadline, or is it in some other category involving expansion of scope or something that is like a significant deviation from what we normally do? Items that were in that simple category of "deadline missed" and so forth, and also didn't cost the State much money, made it through the screen automatically. Items in the other category were knocked off automatically. The only item I'm aware of that -- that doesn't fit that was one school in Eastern Connecticut that was built a hundred years ago, and it was a very strange situation. And out of acknowledgment to just how -- there was no other solution. We gave them a small "notwithstanding," but essentially the very functional policy-oriented screen is the one that was used to take us from a very long list to a very short list in a tough fiscal year. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you, I would note that the total amount of the "notwithstandings," the 16 that we have here before us, comes up to a sum of just shy of \$2.5 million. And I just want to

clarify that if a "notwithstanding" were proposed that simply embraced a technical noncost, through you, Mr. Speaker, this type of "notwithstanding" would be honored? Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it would certainly be honored by me. The process of this bill, like many processes for implementation bills, involve multiparty negotiations, and also involve items showing up at different times. So the screen that I described to you was one that was used in early September. There were items that showed up after that spreadsheet was created -- many items showed up after that spreadsheet was created. And there were many different opinions about how to handle such late items. Whatever those opinions were, however I or others may have felt, it was a multiparty negotiation. The bill that you have before us reflects what the various parties were able to come to consensus on.

And in -- I'm aware of one specific incident where there was something that, in my view, was technical, that involved really missing of a date that

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I -- that I -- I supported having this bill, and it's not in here. And I personally, I'm hopeful that it runs next year. But it's what happens when a process stretches out and you have bills running two weeks later than expected, and there were parties who felt that the process was closed. And so I think that may explain certain incidents that you may be thinking of. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you, let me say that I appreciate my -- my colleague's responses, and look forward to a greater proportional balance of "notwithstandings" as we move forward.

But through you, Mr. Speaker, a question with regard to the language of substitute teachers being employed by local or regional boards of education for 10 or fewer days. Through you, Mr. Speaker, am I to presume that this can be understood that a teaching assignment can be -- someone can come in and be a math teacher for 10 days and then at a different point in that same school district, in that same academic year, that they could then come in and be a substitute

teacher for a physical education teacher? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that description that the distinguished minority leader of my committee -- a Ranking Member has offered, matches my understanding of how this will work. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Simply a point to establish legislative intent, and I appreciate my colleague's clarification.

Regarding the delay in the in-school suspension mandate, through you, Mr. Speaker, the rationale for why the delay was simply for one year. In these very, very difficult fiscal times there was a resounding chorus of public testimony from both boards of education and municipalities to push back this date much further. Through you, Mr. Speaker, an explanation for why the delay goes only until July 1, 2010, and not later. Through you.

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SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, so this is an instance where there is absolutely no difference of opinion between the Chairman and the Ranking Member on the House-side of the committee on this topic, and my feelings happen to align with those of Representative Giuliano. We are part of a process that involves multiple parties, there is a another chamber, there is an executive branch, and there is input from multiple parties; and for us to have a bill before us, we have to have consensus.

So while I happen to share entirely the perspective of my Ranking Member on that issue, extension to July 1, 2010, is what we were able to get agreement on from the multiple parties who have input in this bill. And that's the date we got. And I'll be happy to work with my Ranking Member to see if maybe, you know, we can be considering other things down the road. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you, I just wish to accept my colleague's invitation for further collaboration. And thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good afternoon. Good evening. Nice --

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Well, two more minutes -- two more minutes to good evening, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

All right. I'll hold you to that. Thank you, Representative.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pose a question to the proponent of the bill, Representative Fleischmann.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to Representative Fleischmann, I did receive and hear the explanation you gave to Representative Giuliano in reference to the school suspension project. And I'm very, very encouraged that the Chairman of the Education -- the Education Committee, along with the Ranking Member of the House committee, will be looking in the future, perhaps next year, to extend the deadline as well.

Mr. Speaker, in my own -- in my own city of Waterbury, this project is going to put a great deal of burden on the education system, on the resources that you have in our -- in our departments, and it's going to cost the City of Waterbury \$1 million a year. This is the estimate that I received from our school department and the superintendent of schools, insofar as the cost per year for the City of Waterbury, \$1 million during these difficult economic conditions.

So through you, Mr. Speaker, to the good Representative, is it a fact it could be done? Do you think it would be done that in the next session, in February, we will move this further into the future to be able to save the cities and the towns some money? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, my good colleague's hypothetical involves multiple parties a year in the future. So the only possible answer I can give to that question is I don't know.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This was a very precise answer from the Chairman, I appreciate that. But I encourage him very much so to work in the future to postpone the in-school suspension again, in order for us to ease the burden on municipalities in the next few years or so.

I intend to vote on this bill -- in support of this bill reluctantly, in the hope that in the future we will be able to correct it and move forward and support our municipalities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Aman.

REP. AMAN (14th):

Thank -- thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to address, also, the part of the bill that concerns substitute teachers. And through you, Mr. Speaker, I do have a question of legislative intent.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

Please proceed.

REP. AMAN (14th):

Yes, it's my understanding that the major purpose of this bill is to -- or this provision requiring a bachelor's degree, is to stop a long-term substitute from coming in and being in the same classroom for an extended period of time. But the -- previously the question was asked about switching from math to science and various classes, and I think it was -- the answer was very clear that those would all be separate assignments.

The other question -- so my question on being the same assignment, if you have a substitute teacher that comes into a first grade classroom and serves five days in September, and then come January serves five days in the same classroom, and then comes May and the teacher or substitute gets called for a day in that classroom, is that, through you, Mr. Speaker, is that

three separate assignments? Or because it happens to be in the same classroom, same class, considered one assignment under this bill? For legislative intent.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, for legislative intent, I believe I read this bill the same way my good colleague does, which is the hypothetical he's just given represents three separate assignments. They're separated in time -- it seems just by logic that those are three separate assignments. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Aman.

REP. AMAN (14th):

Thank you very much for the answer. I agree with the Chairman. However, I just wanted to make very clear for legislative intent, because superintendents are going to be looking at this. It's a very sensitive issue in some of the districts, and therefore I want it clarified. And in my own district we have a -- a group of substitute teachers that work in many classrooms, are very, very excellent, they are

there in one school or the other almost every day. And I think this bill, the way it is currently written, will substitute the abuses -- or eliminate the abuses and still allow the good substitutes to continue to work as they should. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Wood.

REP. WOOD (141st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the proponent of the bill, I have some questions.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. WOOD (141st):

On the teacher mentoring program, I read through the education implementor, and it doesn't look as if there's anything outlining the -- a pilot program for this. And I wondered where that was? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, as I believe

Representative Wood may be aware in sort of nonofficial, off-the-floor discussions, there was a decision made not to write legislative language that spelled out the pilot because there are challenges involved. When you're creating a pilot all sorts of things can move around. So it isn't in the bill, but all parties to the construction of the new TEAM Program have a shared understanding, and that includes the State Department of Education, that there will be a pilot program and that it will be starting, I believe, early in 2010. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. WOOD (141st):

All right. Thank you so --

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Wood.

REP. WOOD (141st):

Thank you. I also have to stand in disappointment that the in-school suspension was not pushed off further. We are a community very much impacted by that. It should be a local, community decision. And we were hoping we would have a little more time with that and -- I have many people in my community asking for a longer period of time to keep it suspended. So I'm sorry that that's not in there.

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you --

REP. WOOD (141st):

And thank you too, for the Chairman of the Education Committee and the Ranking Member for all the work they do and all the phone calls they answer and everything they've done to get this through. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Would you care to remark further? Would you care to remark further?

Representative Green.

REP. GREEN (1st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express some concerns about this implemented bill. There's three sections that I'm particularly concerned about. I will make some statements on that and then ask a few questions.

I am concerned about the allotment of monies to the magnet schools. I see here that there was some concern about a fee to the magnet schools. That I felt that the magnet schools -- beginning already and

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having to have dealt with budgets -- to have a reduced amount of monies based on what they anticipated, would have been detrimental to the magnet schools. I think we've tried to correct that. I think we've done better than what was anticipated a couple of weeks ago. And I do want to thank all of the efforts of the people to make that happen.

However, I think we still fall short. One of the issues that we were concerned about and that I was concerned about was the amount of per-pupil expenditure for our magnet school students. We have increased that, we went to another figure next year. I would hope that that figure stays the same for next year, because, again, I don't -- I would hope that we're not back here with magnet schools having a budget and then we maybe reduced that amount, and then they have to think about some serious issues in the middle of the school year. I appreciate that, but I still think we fall short.

And I think we fall short because we have a responsibility to make sure that all of our kids are educated and that the financial resources are there to do that. When the schools open up each year with a budget -- for us to change, possibly, the formula

where -- in terms of the per-pupil expenditure they get, creates quite a hardship on them. I hope they will be able to survive for the remainder of the year with the small amount of increase that I see here in the implementor.

However, I think that it was really unfortunate that our schools had to go through this time where they were unsure as to whether or not the students that enrolled in the school for the year would be able to remain there for the remainder of the year with the staff that they had hired for the year. So I'm really concerned about that and the process of that, but I appreciate some of the effort that were made there.

Some of the things that we talked about -- is being creative in our educational endeavors over the years. A couple of programs that we have, whether it's charter schools, magnet schools, and other programs, we do know that through sometimes -- the No Child Left Behind, we have an issue where some schools are deemed to be inadequate or needing some kinds of improvement. Throughout the past few years, we have tried to be creative in trying to find ways to have the private sector, higher educational system, and our schools and our communities work together to try to

come up with creative ways to make sure that we offer schools and we offer students and we offer parents the opportunity to be engaged in their school system.

So whether it's charter schools, magnet schools, neighborhood schools, themed schools, we have to be creative to make sure that we can attract and keep our students in school. And that they understand that a high school education is the minimum that they should want to obtain, and I would suggest even further education.

When I see a program like (inaudible) with this money, and I'm glad it's allocated. Apparently there was a few years -- a couple years ago where we did some implementing language where even though we fund (inaudible), we didn't -- we took some of their monies through the implementor, and then they was short on their monies. They're committed to helping schools that need improvement. But I think that we have to be very concerned when we have great initiatives that we siphon off the money in other kinds of programs. If we're going to be committed to programs, and financially we say we're going to be committed to a program, like the program of (inaudible), then we should do that.

So again, I express some concern and hope that even though we have allocated some monies, we make sure that we look at the kind of funding that they need. Because they have decided to work with those schools who need progress, who are on the list for improvement, and they are designing great programs there.

The last piece I want to talk about is the in-school, out-of-school suspension and delay for that year. I must express my serious concern and dissatisfaction with this proposal being given some out-years for another year. This legislation, I believe, was passed in 2007, maybe 2008, there was at least a year in preparation that this was going to happen.

One of the things that we have to realize is that our students are being suspended from school. And if we suspend our kids from school, that is a strong indicator of kids not completing school. If you were to do some research on tying in the number of days that a kid may get suspended, and look at their attainment in terms of elementary and high school, we know that the higher number of suspensions may be directly related to whether or not that student

graduates from high school. It's very important that our schools come up with systems to keep kids in school.

There have been a number of my colleagues who believe that having schools keep kids in -- having school systems address the issue of suspensions is going to create a financial burden on the schools. I am trying to understand the logic behind the extra cost of keeping kids in school.

Students -- the State allocates funds per student when they enroll in school. We expect our students to be in school, we expect to educate our students, and we -- we expect that when students enroll in the beginning of the year. We should not believe that if we have to suspend our students, that it's going to cost us more money to educate them. We've already allocated the money to educate our students.

If all of those students showed up every day and none of our students got suspended, we would have to educate them. I don't understand how a school system could say, well, if I suspend the kid and have to provide education, it's going to cost me more money. I'm just having a difficult time understanding that logic.

However, even if it does cost to try to continue to involve our students in educational pursuits -- what's more expensive, education or ignorance? What's more expensive, education or jail? What's more expensive, education or serious mental health needs? What's more expensive, education or substance use? What's more expensive?

In this piece of legislation -- and I won't get involved with this piece -- in this piece of legislation we talk about creating an early childhood cabinet. We're talking about creating an early childhood cabinet. Now, I'm not sure exactly what the early childhood cabinet is supposed to do, but if I'm saying that I want to create an early childhood cabinet because I want to help our students start off so they can be successful, that's great, I support that.

Now that early childhood cabinet is going to look at issues from birth to probably age 9, which means some of those students will be in school. If that early childhood education was to say, education is the number one predictor of success and health for our young people, we should keep them in school. Here we have an early childhood education on one hand, but

we're telling the school systems don't try to educate your children if there are -- some discipline problems.

There were in the last few years -- there were in the last statistics that the State Department of Education were able to draw, there was two -- 251,000-plus school days lost by students being suspended. 251,000 school days lost. Over -- 175,000 students in the state of Connecticut had experienced being suspended out-of-school at least one day. 175,000 of our children were suspended from school in that school year, a total of 251,000 school days out of school. I don't know about you, but if I look at for a school year some of our young people lost 251,000 school days, I would be concerned.

If you look at the legislation that we have, the current legislation says that our schools should have a policy to keep kids in school. That our schools should have a policy that says that before you suspend a student out-of-school, you should do A, B, C, D. I'm a school social worker, I work in the schools. And I would have to admit to you -- I would have to admit to you -- I shouldn't have watched Dave Letterman last night -- but I'm going to admit to you

I'm a school social worker, and I'm going to admit to you possibly some bad things that I might have done on my job. I've seen students get suspended, and I'm not sure I've advocated as strong for them to say that they should not be suspended out-of-school. I'm not sure if I've advocated strong enough to say, wait a minute, what would be the benefit of keeping this kid in school or out of school?

When I looked at the statistics on out-of-school suspensions and I looked at the categories -- because there's a lot of misinformation out there. There's some people that want to believe that the kids that's getting suspended out-of-school are the most dangerous, the most violent, the most unsafe students to be in school. Out of the hundred -- over 175,000 students that's been suspended in that school year, 120,000 of the 170 -- 170,000 -- 120,000 of those students were suspended for what we call "insubordination." They weren't suspended for drugs, they weren't suspended for violence, they weren't suspended for fighting. They were suspended for being late, they were suspended for truancy, they were suspended for inappropriate language, they were suspended for not being respectful.

Insubordination -- because 120,000 of the kids out of 170 were suspended for insubordination.

The lowest category of how schools describe that is the behaviors that you're concerned about. Why are we suspending 120,000 kids per year for insubordination, for truancy, for being late? This legislation simply says -- this legislation simply says, you can suspend students out-of-school. In fact, the law says right now that you can suspend them and it says what you should do when you suspend a kid.

And I, again, have got to tell you -- and I would challenge each and every one of you, because I know my colleagues may not have experienced this, but if you were a parent and your child was being suspended, I could almost guarantee you that very rarely did that parent get a call before they were suspended. That that parent got a call to come into the school to talk to the school and the child and the teacher about what was the behavior that might rise to the occasion of a suspension. What can we do in alternative to suspension? Give me the homework, give the work to do while they're on suspension. And how to make sure that I can help you, as a parent in the school, to prevent this behavior in the future. I doubt it. I

doubt if it happened like that.

That's the current law. The school systems are not following the current law. Why the school systems might say that it's going to be a burden to suspend -- to keep kids in school today, I don't understand that. They're not following the procedures when they suspend kids out-of-school, today, now -- they're not doing that. So they say, wait a minute, wait a minute, it's going to cost us a lot of money if we suspend -- if we have to keep kids in school.

The school systems -- before the law was in effect, the school superintendents had -- I got the same message as you got, the school superintendents have already said this is going to be a financial burden. I don't know how they can anticipate that, here I give monies to keep kids in school each year, I'm going to anticipate that it's going to cost me three, four hundred thousand dollars, to keep kids in school. I've already got the money -- to keep kids in school, so why do you make me not -- why do you pass a law to have me not allow to suspend? This law does not say that schools cannot suspend out-of-school. It doesn't say that. Every school system still had the opportunity, under current practice, to suspend kids

out-of-school. This changes nothing. It changes nothing.

What it does say is this: First of all, you should follow the policy that's already the law, because if they followed the policy that's already the law, we wouldn't even really be here. The reasons we're here -- and I remember a few years ago -- and the reason I got involved with this, because there were some young people in my city, and I went to a community group and they said, Representative Green, our schools, Hartford Public Schools, has suspended too many kids out-of-school. We don't want to be out of school. We want to be more productive. We tried to explain to the schools that we would prefer to do something more educational than to be out on the streets. We don't think we should get suspended for all the reasons we do. Can you help us?

Here are young people, some of them had gotten into trouble in the schools saying, I want to be in school. And then, you know, of course, when -- any time you go to your community, they give you probably some of the most heartrending stories. You know, the young man who was late a few times to school, got a warning not to be late again. Was late again,

suspended for three days. The person trying to go to school was told not to come to school. They didn't have anything in terms of what they were going to do for three days, didn't have any work, had no supervision at home for three days.

If we don't keep our kids in school and educate them, the exposure that we give them -- to have them out of school, to get into other kinds of difficulties, is going to cost us a lot more later on. It's going to cost us a lot more later on. I would love to work with school systems and say, if we were to implement this piece of the legislation -- and I would encourage us to think about not delaying the implementation.

I wish -- I wasn't as involved in the language of this bill as it was being developed. And it sounded like there was a lot of input, I wish I -- in fact, I made this suggestion to a couple of people, but I wish we would have done it the other way. I wish we would have said, let's do the bill as is, let's implement the legislation now. And then towns, school districts, superintendents, come to us a year out, tell us how many students were suspended, tell us what it would cost to keep kids in school. Give us some

real numbers as what the cost is for implementing the law that you had time to develop.

And then, if you can demonstrate to me the real cost for trying to keep kids in school based on this particular piece of legislation, then I think I would have been much, much more willing to say maybe we needed to delay it, maybe suspend it while we see what the real costs are. But the school systems were saying it's going to be a cost before it went into effect. And then they want to delay it another year after we've started the law.

The law has been implemented, it started July 1st. The law went through the process of the public hearing. The law went through the process here, in the Chamber. We passed a law and then we said, do it in a year. Now that we have to do it after the law had started without public input, we change the delay by extending the date. I'm not sure that's the way we do it.

So it is very important to me that we try to do things that are preventive in the same way that we have the early childhood cabinet in this piece of legislation. The early childhood legislation is about prevention. It's about saying, if we can try to

figure out how we can help children early on, we can prevent some things later on. It's about prevention.

We could talk about prevention, we could talk about intervention, or we could talk about rehabilitation. And we know that when a person -- when we put money into rehabilitation, we know how much it costs us. And people say, you know what, it's too late sometimes. Why didn't we intervene earlier? So then we talk about putting money into strategies for intervention. And even, sometimes, intervention is too late.

So then we say, let's put money into prevention. Can we get a cost-effectiveness out of preventive programs? Can we avoid the cost later on if we prevent things early on? We can prevent dropouts, we can prevent involvement in the criminal justice system, we can prevent unhealthy young adults, we can prevent teen pregnancy. We can prevent some of these issues if we keep kids in school. And those students who may be struggling, that might be subject to being suspended, those are the ones that need the most help. Those are the ones that need a little bit of time to find out what's really happening.

This legislation does not prevent -- the current

legislation does not prevent school systems from suspending kids that are unsafe and dangerous and is interfering with the educational process of the school. This doesn't do that. Delaying this does more harm than good.

There are times when I think we, as legislators, have to make sure that people understand that we have some particular issues that we're passionate about. And I remember a quote by Martin Luther King, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. In the end we do not remember the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

There are too many things happening in our community and our state of Connecticut that we, as legislators and the public officials and the leadership of this state, we take a lot of criticism for the budget; we take a lot of criticism on whether or not we're partisan politics; we take a lot of criticism, but we have men and women here that care about the citizens of the state of Connecticut. And we have to make sure that we express at certain times how passionate we are about the things that matter. The things that matter to our children, the things that matter to our elderly, the things that matter.

Education matters to me. And educating all of our children matters to me. And if we have the will, the knowledge, and the ability to keep kids in school and educate -- because we know what happens when we don't, then I'm for that. And I will always fight for that. And I don't think this -- delay of this bill is the proper thing to do at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Hetherington.

REP. HETHERINGTON (125th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very disappointed that this bill simply delays, for a matter of months, the imposition of the mandate concerning in-school suspension. I listened carefully to the eloquency of the gentleman who just spoke, his words ring true. I understand his passion and his commitment, but the point is we do not have to make this a universal mandate.

The State is not compensating the schools for the cost of in-school suspension. This is entirely a local matter. It has to be financed locally. So there is no reason why we have to have a universal

mandate. There is no reason why we can't let local school officials, who are closest to the situation, to the needs of their own community, the expectations of their people, of their citizens, make this decision. And there is absolutely no difference to Town Y, what Town X does in terms of in-school suspension. Let it be determined by the good judgment of those who actually manage the local schools, and are responsible directly to the parents.

I have heard without exception from school superintendents on this matter, and the ones I have heard from are opposed to this. It is a mandate which adds costs to local communities, which some communities don't feel they need. And we must -- we must accept the reality that we are imposing a cost on local communities that is a direct-cost passed on to local taxpayers. And that it makes this unfunded mandate -- this unfunded mandate still another burden that our towns and our taxpayers must bear.

The delay is not adequate. It requires towns that exercise foresight to be deprived of the ability to plan on what will happen next year or the year after. There is some certainty needed here, and that certainty is taken away without local option.

For that reason -- for that reason, and for the fact that I'm -- I have some serious concerns about -- about some of the actions -- some of the actions that we are approving by this legislation, and some of the matters that were needs of other communities that didn't make it -- that didn't make it in this legislation. That I'm regretfully going to vote opposed -- vote in opposition to this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative McCrory.

REP. McCRORY (7th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to just say a brief -- a couple words about the bill. I think we did a great job with this -- a piece of legislation. Ninety-five percent of it I agree with. The committee chairs and all the ranking committee members and all the members did an excellent job on this piece of legislation. It helps beginning teachers, it provides opportunity for people to come into the state of Connecticut and teach our children, it just does a whole lot of things.

There's just one section of the bill that I'm

troubled with. And that is the delay with the implementation of the inside-suspension portion of the bill. And many of you know that I am an educator in the school system. And I probably have suspended more students than everyone in this chamber combined -- whether it was inside or outside.

So I think I have a little knowledge and history when it comes to that portion of this piece of legislation. It was mentioned earlier that the state of Connecticut -- students in the state of Connecticut have lost a total of 251,000 school days in the school year '06-'07. That is a very large number. But when you dig a little deeper into the numbers and start to analyze exactly who is being suspended in our state of Connecticut, you can begin to connect the dots with what's going on in our educational system. And also what's going on in our juvenile justice system, which leads to what's going on in our adult incarceration system.

The State Department of Education did an outstanding job when this bill was passed back in 2008, in developing guidelines for in-school and out-of-school suspension. I will encourage all my colleagues who do not agree with implementing this

bill right now as it has been passed, and which should have been done back in 2008, to read the guidelines. Because the guidelines will provide you about -- as much information as you need to know what is actually going on in our public educational system.

I would encourage you to read specifically where it says that academic achievement is directly aligned with discipline and the number of days a student is in school. So therefore, if we're truly concerned about bridging the academic achievement gap in the state of Connecticut, let's look at the facts, because I like to look at facts when I voice my opinion. And if you look at the facts of who is being disciplined and put out of our public educational schools, the facts say, from the State Department of Education, that males receive sanctions twice as much as females; that men of color leads the pack in the number of people being suspended in our schools; that children with disabilities are suspended at greater -- much greater than a number of them in our public education system.

So when you start to connect the dots with -- if we're going to put these children out of our schools because we have not found a research-based mechanism to keep them in school to educate them, what happens?

Well, I'll tell you what happens. It's what the children say to me when I suspend them, well, thank you for the vacation. I'll be out of school for how many days, Mr. McCrory, three or five this time? Three or five? And trust me, I am not lenient. If I'm going to suspend you, it's going to be for a very good reason.

Which was mentioned earlier by my colleague, the number one cause for children being suspended out-of-school is because of attendance problems. Now, how much sense does that make? You did not come to school, you were tardy for school, and because of that, I'm going to keep you out of school. Now, does that make sense? I don't think so.

Another reason is for insubordination. Well, understand, people, there are a large number of children in our public education system that feels as though -- that the educators do not understand them. And any little thing they do could be considered insubordination. For example, if you don't look me in my eyes when I speak to you, you could be considered insubordinate. Culturally, if you do not understand some children that looking in the eyes of adults is being disrespectful for them, but if you don't

understand that you will consider that kid to be insubordinate. And guess what? That child gets a vacation. I tell you, you really need to look at these guidelines for inside- and out-of-school suspension. They're very important, they give you an insight.

Well, look, let's see, well we know we have an achievement gap in the state of Connecticut and we know what population of children who are not being properly educated, they are directly associated with the number of people who are being incarcerated. And you talk about dollars and what we're spending? Where it costs about -- maybe 10, \$11,000 a year to educate a child and it costs about 30 or 40,000 a year to incarcerate a child. And we're worried about spending? And you're telling me you're fiscally conservative? Doesn't make sense to me. It just doesn't.

So if we want to be prudent about truly bridging the academic achievement gap, about truly improving the quality of education of our students; about really looking at what's going on in our educational system, our juvenile justice system, and our corrections system, let's be proactive. And trust me, people, the

cost of doing business as you put this out further continues to rise.

It's not like it's going to be cheaper to hold a program, most of this doesn't even affect 75 percent of the school districts in the state of Connecticut anyway, because they don't even have a problem with the number of students being suspended outside. It doesn't affect 75 percent of our school districts. And some -- of the larger school districts, such as Hartford, they already have a program. So what are we discussing?

The reality is this: The Governor provided a boatload of money two years ago for education. She is known as the "educational governor." School districts receive boatloads of money back in 2008, the legislation was passed back in 2008. You knew, we knew, we all knew this was coming.

So we sit here doing the implementor bill, and now we want to postpone it. Well, wait, things like this should have gone through the Education Committee. If we truly want to do something about it, shouldn't we have had this discussion this year, and agreed on doing this during session? We did not do that. We want to do it now. I don't think that's the right way

we should do business.

So in closing -- because I know we want to go home -- I'll sum it up like this: I suggest we start the process and find out how much it really costs. I heard one school district say it's going to cost us \$700,000. I looked at the number of students they were suspending, they only suspended 40 kids. Where are these numbers coming from? Trust me, I'm going to close -- but people, let's be smart about what we're doing. Let's set real policy. I'm going to vote for this, I have to because there's so many good things. The positives outweigh the negatives in this bill, I have to vote for it.

But the reality is this portion is bad policy. And if we think about coming back here next year and putting it out another year and another year, let's just say what you really want to say, you don't want to do it. And I'm going to fight you all the way to the end. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Holder-Winfield.

REP. HOLDER-WINFIELD (94th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very briefly, I wanted

to associate myself with the comments of Representative McCrory. You know, if students are dangerous, I don't necessarily want them in school. If students are doing some of the things that we know don't belong in the school, I don't want them in school. And that's exactly what this bill says. This bill doesn't say that you have to keep these students in school. What we've been talking about is not really what this bill does, and I think that's part of the problem.

We want to make sure that our kids have the chance to be educated, and we don't want our kids put out of school for some of the reasons that we've been talking about. We don't want our kids put out of school because they didn't come to school. We don't want our kids put out of school because they've been late a lot of the time.

So I want to be on record as saying that what I want to do is do this as soon as possible. I don't want to put it off another year, another two years. And I think as we do that we can think of more reasons not to do this thing, and that's doing the exact wrong thing. If we want to be a state that is doing the right thing for education -- we want to do the right

thing for education, that's making sure the students who we're putting out have -- are staying in school.

And one other thing before I close, we talked a little bit earlier about not wanting to put people out on their own recognizance, young people who can't take care of themselves. Well, that's exactly what we're doing when we put these people out of school. So if we're talking about wanting to make sure that these kids are safe, then this is another way that we can make sure these kids are safe because we're not going to put them on the streets and have to look after themselves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to associate these remarks with my colleagues from the other side of the aisle, and specifically my good friend from the 1st. I think that there are many schools that do excessively suspend young people from school out-of-school. And I think if we are going to have an impact on the achievement gap, we cannot educate children if they are not within the confines

of our four walls. And when they are within the confines of the four walls, they need to have someone in front of them who knows what they're doing, who's not babysitting them, who can engage them, and ask them to step up to learn, to participate, and to become functioning young people in our communities.

I think we have several components to that though, that make a difference. And while out-of-school suspension may -- excessive out-of-school suspension and eliminating that may be one component, I think it's too broad a brush. Because I, personally, represent a community or several communities that does not excessively suspend kids out-of-school. And why should they be painted with the same brush as those schools that do?

We have several formulas that have been floating around for the last couple of years that target specific districts that do excessively suspend kids from school. And I would encourage this body to look at those formulas, to really get serious about targeting school districts that are not doing the job of educating all children.

But the other piece to that, Mr. Speaker, is that we have to have programs in our schools that speak to

all children from all different nationalities, with all different interests, with all different learning styles, so that they do want to stay in school. So it's relevant to them and it has meaning to them and to their futures.

So Mr. Speaker, while I support my colleagues from the other side of the aisle, most likely I will be voting for this legislation because we do need to give relief to our communities. But I think that we, as a legislative body, need to be more thoughtful about how we do this. And to get very serious about what it is we're trying to do, and target those districts that are not doing the job that they are empowered to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, concluding remarks from this side of the aisle. First of all, a question for legislative intent, through you, Mr. Speaker, to Representative Fleischmann.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you. Representative Fleischmann, the bill before us contains line 1299, in it it refers to the Norwalk Maritime Museum. The actual name of the entity, I believe, we're referring to here is the Norwalk Maritime Aquarium. And for purposes of legislative intent, I'm asking if that, in fact, was the intent of the particular section; to make sure that there's no delay in -- or confusion as to who the recipient is. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the distinguished Minority Leader, yes, that is my precise understanding of the intent of line 1299.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the gentleman for his answers.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the last bill. I presume after myself the Majority Leader will speak, we're going to vote, and go home. Many might think

that's it, we're done. Phew. Been a long time, nine-plus months. October 2nd, we'll wrap it all up. It's all over now, we took care of business.

Unfortunately, I have to disagree. I have to disagree because I think we're going to be back here pretty soon. I reference the Comptroller's letter, and I think, unfortunately, the worst financial news that we're going to have to deal with. And it brings me to the bill that's before us.

Because one of the oddities of being in the legislature is many a times you agree with your colleagues as to what they say in the substance, but you reach a different conclusion. I heard Representative Green and Representative McCrory and Representative Holder-Winfield talk about the bill and their concerns with regard to the delay of in-school suspension. And I would like to comment that I, as a person who voted for that provision, agree with everything they say. Everything they say with regard to the importance of that provision.

One of the reasons that I voted for it originally was because in my capacity as an expulsion officer for the City of Norwalk, all too often -- all too often I would see the temptation, or unfortunately in some

cases the reality, of the easier choice to just get the kid out of school. Get them out of school. And there's always ironies, like Representative McCrory pointed out. It might be for excessive absences or tardiness, so the punishment is kick the kid out of school. We might be concerned about gang or drug activity, so now we're going to send the kid out of school for 10 days unsupervised, with nothing to do during the day, with mom and dad -- if they have a mom and dad -- not home to supervise. So they get free to roam the streets and do what they were doing, on a more full-time basis. That's wrong.

So when we passed that law, I believed in that law. We had to tweak it a little bit, and we did that, because unfortunately the first time that we passed it we weren't specific as to how the law could be executed. Meaning how schools can accommodate room for these students that they once were kicking out for 10 days. So I would -- I am very much supportive of that bill. I think it is going to be an important component to our educational system, especially in our urban centers.

But here's the dilemma we're in, it costs money. And yes, with all due respect, Representative McCrory,

it does cost money. It's going to cost my town a quarter of a million dollars to put it in effect. It's going to cost Stamford between 350 and 600,000 dollars to put in effect. Because either they need the physical space or the personnel to fully comply with the law. And right now, all of our towns and cities and boards of education are hurting, folks. They're hurting.

So the question becomes at what expense will they carry out this law if we do not delay it? Because as important as an in-school suspension program is, especially to at-risk kids, so are programs that have been in effect for years. Maybe it's a reading intervention program, maybe it's a tutoring program, maybe it's an after-school program, maybe it's a sporting event, a band, a club that has saved a kid, that has put them on the right path. And because, possibly, that we are requiring that funds be expended to implement a program, as necessary as it is, that has not yet been implemented, they will take away from those programs.

So on the one hand we're doing good, on the other hand we could be doing harm. And isn't it true, don't the boards of education, school superintendents have a

right to turn to us and say, wait a minute here. You folks expend 17 to 18 billion dollars a year on programs that you think are important, programs that are needed for needy and poor and handicapped. And if you think this is so important, then why the heck don't you give us the money to do it? They might very well say that.

You see, we can't have it both ways, folks. We can't say it's a great program, we got to do it, it's necessary, et cetera, and then say, but we ain't going to pay for it. And the problem that I have here in this bill is the fact that we have to delay it, but then on the other hand, the fact that we're only delaying it for one year. Why? We just passed a two-year budget. Is money going to come out of the sky next year? Is all of a sudden boards of education going to pick up the phone and call us up and say, hey, you know what? We're all set. I know you passed a two-year budget, I know we were flat-funded, I know a year has gone by, but somehow through the grace of God we have found money to institute this program. No. No.

And that's why, again, with all due respect to Representative McCrory, this side of the aisle

proposed not once, not twice, not three times, four or five, but six times that we handle this problem. That we commit to the program, but we delay its implementation to 2012. Not only to allow our municipalities and boards of education to gear up for it, but to make it the best program it could be. Not a babysitting service. Not something that is not thought out. Making it -- make it a meaningful experience. That's not going to happen in nine months, folks. We have 169 towns and municipalities, many of which could not afford to implement this program. And this being October 2nd, had been in violation of the law for three months.

So now we're making it better for nine more months. So when we're back in this chamber in the next session, we're going to be having this same discussion. The things Representative McCrory, Representative Green, and myself said haven't changed. But what are we going to do to allow -- enable our towns and municipalities to pay for these programs?

Representative McCrory made an -- an excellent point. Two years ago, we infused in our municipalities the largest amount of money in the history of the state of Connecticut to ECS. Buckets

of money. Buckets of money. More than they ever expected. I'm sure, to this day, all of us are getting calls saying, thanks, we're all set. We got all we need, you guys took care of us two years ago. We don't need another nickel. Oh, I don't think we're hearing that, because prices go up and fuel prices go up and contracts kick in and inflation kicks in, and then the state puts other mandates on them that they have to abide by. And then we may cut municipal funding in another area that might affect boards of education.

I stand here in total support of the premise and the idea of this bill. Because let me tell you something, I, like many other representatives, lives in -- live in towns that -- sometimes without malice, the easier, cheaper solution is kick the kid out of school for 10 days. Get them out of my hair. He's a problem, she's a problem, get them out of my hair. But all too often I've seen the other end of that result, the cost to society, the cost to the community, the cost to our criminal justice system, et cetera.

So yes, it is something we have to do, we have to be serious about. But on the other hand, for God

sakes, let's be fair. Let's not say we think you should do it, but we ain't going to give you a nickel to do it. And let's not just say we're going only to suspend it for nine months, so now you can sweat nine more months, figure out how you're going to do it in July. That's what we're doing here, folks.

On the other hand of the scale, that's why you're going to see a Christmas tree on the board when we vote. We all care, how would it look? I mean, what if I vote against it, they'll come after me in the election, so you voted against the blah, blah, blah -- that's the way we think. It's too bad, but that's the way we think. We have notwithstanding clauses. This one got this; I got this, I got this. Well, why? Because they said, in this case, it's especially, actually appropriate, but in the other case, it technically is not because -- there's winners and there's losers. There's winners and there's losers. And that's why you're going to see green buttons and red buttons out there.

But, also, ladies and gentlemen, these are policies. This is one of four bills we did today to so -- supposedly implement a budget. A budget of a state that's supposed to have a vision; that's

supposed to look forward two years and say this is where we want to go. With all due respect -- and I respect each and every one of you, I am not proud of this product. I am not proud how we got here, and I'm not proud of what we produced. And I'm afraid that what we produced will not work for long and will cause more problems down the road.

So, ladies and gentlemen, for the time, I guess, we did conclude our business. We might not be back in the chamber for a while after this vote. I love you all, but I won't miss you. But I'm not so sure -- I'm not so sure that we should hold our head high as to the product we come out with, because I think we have done a disservice to the state of Connecticut.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Merrill.

Actually, Representative Fleischmann wants to say a few. Sorry.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate being recognized briefly before the Majority Leader because she, of course, is our leader

who will wrap up debate, and what I have to say actually doesn't speak to the substance of the bill right now. Because I believe that we've heard from both sides a lot of very thoughtful arguments about major policy elements in this bill, and I have to say that there's not a single thing I've heard said from either side of the aisle that didn't have a lot of truth to it and, you know, reasonable people can disagree on some thorny issues. And I think that's what happened here tonight. And I just want to say I, personally, feel that a debate of the sort that we just had elevates this Chamber because there are disagreements, but there is nothing but genuine, heartfelt passion about where our policies ought to go and good arguments on both sides.

And I'm confident, though there will be a mix of lights on the board, that this bill, I'm hopeful, will pass. And I do think on balance, we've got a very good bill before us.

We have the good bill because people worked together to develop legislation here. And it's -- you know, they say it takes a -- it takes a village to raise a child. Well, it takes a real community to write a big bill, so I just wanted to recognize the

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people who labored in the field to make this bill happen.

At LCO, there's an attorney named Chris Cordima, who has put in -- I don't know how many hours to get this drafting done.

At the Office of Legislative Research, we had not one, not two, but three people helping: Judith Lohman, Soncia Coleman, and John Moran. At OFA, we had two people helping, Sarah Bourne and Alan Shepard.

At the Office of Policy and Management -- I don't know how many people they had, but Secretary Bob Genuario was a person who I had several conversations with and discussions with. He's a gentleman and was -- and improved this bill.

At the State Department of Ed, Jennifer Widness. My Cochair up in the Senate, Tom Gaffey. No one knows more about education policy in this state than he does. And it's -- I can't put it into words how much he did for this bill.

Moving to this Chamber, my Ranking Member, Marilyn Giuliano, always a pleasure to work with. Our Vice Chair, Representative Tom Reynolds. The excellent language that we have regarding early childhood cabinet and early childhood education was

due to him.

Our Majority Leader, Denise Merrill, and our Finance Chair, Cam Staples, did me the personal favor of stepping in at times when I needed them, and I just wanted to express personal thanks. Our Bonding Chair, Carlo Leone, helped make sure that this bill aligned with bonding. Our Minority Leader, Larry Cafero, showed nothing but personal understanding and caring with regard to this bill and regard to myself, personally.

And finally, our speaker Chris Donovan. Mr. Speaker, thank you so much for your leadership on this bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to thank Representative Fleischmann for his work on the education bill.

And it's fitting probably, this evening that we end this very long budget journey that we've gone on for the last months. This is certainly, in my 16 years here, the most difficult budget session I've

ever been through, and I'm sure that I speak for many people.

We've come a long way, and I think it's fitting that we end it on education. Because I think the greatest victory we had this year is the fact that we saved most of the education funding that we've all been discussing tonight, and talking about that for our towns and for the children of the state. It was a high priority for everyone in this Chamber, and so it's just important to recognize that.

Personally, I'm glad it's over, too. I hope it's over at least for one chapter of all this. And thanks to everyone who participated, it's been long and difficult. And thanks to the Speaker for his -- all his work on all these budget bills, and even to our friends in the Senate. So we will be voting shortly and this is a fitting end to our long journey together. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you.

Would staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members takes their seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber. The House is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber, please.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Please check the roll call board to make sure your votes have been properly cast.

If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked. The Clerk will please take a tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill Number 2053.

Total number voting	125
Necessary for passage	63
Those voting Yea	105
Those voting Nay	20
Those absent and not voting	26

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The emergency bill is passed.

Are there any announcements or introductions?

Representative Wood.

REP. WOOD (141st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to stand and mark the passing of a former member of this