

PA 11-115

HB6325

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**JOINT  
STANDING  
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**EDUCATION  
PART 1  
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Coleman.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GEORGE A. COLEMAN: First of all I want to say, good morning. And I'm happy to know that 55 is just the beginning of getting old, so that I still have a lot more flexibility here in terms of what I can look forward to.

I think that it's particularly a pleasure to talk to you this morning. We all get a sense that there are lots of innovations that are expected in education, a lot of adjustments in order to meet the budgetary conditions of our time.

And our big challenge is how do we preserve that which is good? How do we weed out those things that might not be serving us? And how do we continue to make sure that Connecticut students are among the most competitive in the country? So I think that's all -- that's our big charge that we're going to have to be working together towards the foreseeable future in order to make that happen.

So I'm very privileged to comment on some bills, particularly those that we are supportive of. We've provided written testimony and I'm looking forward to whatever questions you might have to better explore or give advice relative to how we might proceed based upon our understandings today.

I want to start by looking at or commenting on Raised Bill 930. Of course, that is a bill concerning school entry age. A part of what we've been charged with as the State is to reduce the achievement gap.

A great deal of the achievement gap is represented in an initial start gap for many

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the bill, we want to make sure that the Legislature anticipates that what is needed is really an electronic system for being able -- for our two agencies to interact with each other.

In the State Department of Education alone, we receive over 30,000 certification applications. And to be able to make these matches effectively, that kind of assistance would be needed in order to carry out that task. We do embrace the task and know that that kind of investment in the electronic capability between our two agencies is important.

We certainly support Raised Bill 6319. And this recognizes the amazing contribution that our war veterans, in this case, our Korean War veterans have made, and enable the awarding of a high school diploma to those individuals who have served our country and who, for whatever reasons, education might have been interrupted and not have allowed them to accomplish that.

There are precious few of these -- of this generation left, and that this distinction of a high school diploma is very, I think, consistent both with the lessons that they have learned and all that they have taught generations subsequently that are consistent with that distinction.

Raised Bill 6325, AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE ENTRY -- REENTRY AND EDUCATION. The State Department of Education -- we support that bill, House Bill Number 6325, to require immediate enrollment of students who transfer from Unified School District Number 1 and Unified School District Number 2, to amend notification laws regarding student transfers from these schools and to amend the time

required for expelled students seeking to reenter their previous school.

There are some suggestions that we have relative to some amendment to the language that is identified and we have passed that on to you. We're particularly concerned that the legislation -- that there is other legislation that would enable -- and that school districts currently can use and we'd want to make sure that notwithstanding the provisions that are provided to school districts under the legislation, that this work can move forward.

We also understand that there are -- there needs to be some appreciation from the -- for the settings from which these students come to detention, meaning that these students don't all come from school to detention. Some of them come from other -- some of them have dropped out of schools. Some of them have come from other kinds of settings. We also need to acknowledge in some ways the amount of time that students will be in this detention.

There's a difference if a student is going to be there waiting adjudication for ten days, as opposed to a student who might be there for six weeks, and what might be an appropriate response. And we would look forward to working with the Legislature in terms of making those adjustments where they are important to realizing the outcomes of the legislation and the role of this -- of the local school districts in participating under those provisions.

Raised Bill 6385, and that is AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR. I think that the Governor has certainly been bold in making sure that he wants to reinforce and support education at

REP. LYDDY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just quickly, I think another example is if a principal is a perpetrator of a child. In those instances, it's very difficult for teachers or administrative assistants or anybody else working in the school to report. So that's just another example.

I want to thank you for your advocacy on behalf of the children and families that this bill certainly highlights. The report from the Attorney General and the Office of a Child Advocate is one of the most disturbing reports I think I've read in the last two and half years I've been here.

And I don't quite honestly think we're doing enough with that report. Not enough light has been shined on that report and the various issues that have stemmed from it. So I'm happy to see you as an official here testifying on behalf of it and in support of it and for those families. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MICHELLE CRUZ: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Other questions? If not, thank you very much for your testimony and your advocacy.

MICHELLE CRUZ: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: We now move onto House Bill 6325. And Melanie Starks from Connecticut Legal Services is signed up first on this bill to be followed by John Gill.

MELANIE STARKS: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman,

Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. My name is Melanie Starks and I'm a staff attorney with the Children at Risk Unit of Connecticut Legal Services.

CLS represents families of children and youth who are having difficulty accessing behavioral and/or educational services. I'm here today to urge you to support House Bill 6325, AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE REENTRY IN EDUCATION.

This bill would require the enrollment of students transferring from USB 1 and 2 back to a local school district to be immediate and to the same school that the student attended prior to leaving, acceptance of credit for their instruction at USB 2 schools and require the districts to allow these students to return to school from the detention centers or the residential facilities they've been placed at without expelling them for additional time.

When students leave CJTS, juvenile detention or a residential placement they face many challenges. They're moving, sometimes returning to their families. Sometimes they're not. In their attempts to get back to a normal life they must deal with parole officers, probation officer, DCF workers and school administrators. As you would imagine, this is a very difficult transition for them.

In our work at CLS we have seen firsthand the obstacles these students face. We've worked with students who were told upon their return to the school from districts that the school they had previously attended was full and that they must reregister.

Some districts were require all students returning from CJTS or other residential

placements to spend a period of time at an alternative school before they are allowed to return to their home school. Some students have returned to school only to face an expulsion hearing.

As the statute is currently drafted, a student who was in juvenile detention for 160 days could then return to school and be expelled by his local school system for an additional 180 days. As you can imagine, these situations can be incredibly discouraging for students and their families.

When we are involved we are able to help a student and his family navigate these obstacles, but for many students this can mean never returning to school because it is just too discouraging.

It is clear when students face multiple barriers to school entry after an out-of-district placement they are much less likely to return to school and therefore -- because they are discouraged. Ultimately if our goal is to encourage them to finish high school and become productive citizens, then we must not permit these types of artificial barriers.

This bill's purpose is to remove such barriers to reentry for our state's most vulnerable students. We therefore urge the committee to support House Bill 6325, AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE REENTRY AND EDUCATION.

I thank you for your consideration and I welcome questions.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for your testimony and your advocacy on behalf of these children, many of whom really don't have advocates



besides you.

I want you to know that this is, I believe, the third bill I've dealt with since becoming chair of this committee to try and assist children who are coming from Unified School Districts 1 or 2 -- get proper reentry into their school and recognition of their school work. It's hope -- I'd like to think this would fix the problems once and for all.

Are there comments or questions from members of the committee? If not, thank you very much for your time and your effort.

MELANIE STARKS: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: John Gill of the Children's Community Program of Connecticut to be followed by Marvin Jackson.

It looks like John Gill is not here. Is Marvin Jackson still here? Or Hannah Benton?

This is what they call the process of attrition.

We move onto House Bill 6385. First person signed up there is Rick Tanasi of AFT and I see Rick is here.

RICK TANASI: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann and all the members of the Education Committee.

As president of nearly 1200 members of the State Vocational Federation of Teachers -- and I may want to add that I am also a proud graduate of the system A.I. Prince -- it is my honor to represent the educators who provide over 10,000 Connecticut students outstanding

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TESTIMONY OF

GEORGE A. COLEMAN, ACTING COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

ON

RAISED BILLS 930, 6326, 6319, 6325, 6385, 932, 929, 6318

RAISED BILL 930: AN ACT CONCERNING THE SCHOOL ENTRANCE AGE

The State Department of Education (CSDE) supports S.B. No. 930, *AAC The School Entrance Age*, to change the school entrance age requirement, beginning in the school year commencing July 1, 2012, from January first to October first, and to delete the provision allowing parents to withhold enrolling their child in kindergarten until the child is seven years old.

Currently students between the ages of 4 ½ and 7 years old may be enrolled in the same Kindergarten class. Such a wide developmental range makes it challenging to the instructional needs of all children and likely has a negative impact on achievement.

In addition, CT is one of only four states (California, Connecticut, Michigan, Vermont), and the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands that have cut-off dates between December 1 and January 1. Thirty-five states and Puerto Rico have kindergarten entrance cut-off dates between August 31 and October 16. This bill would result in a policy more consistent with other states.

In order to ensure that the neediest students in our state who would no longer be eligible to enroll in kindergarten under this bill have access to preschool, the CSDE recommends an ongoing additional investment of funding for providing preschool opportunities through an expansion of School Readiness funding to 4-year-olds in the 19 current and former priority school districts.

With that said, CSDE supports S.B. No. 930, with an increase in school readiness funds for those students in priority school districts who are 5 years of age between October 1 and January 1 (approximately 3300 students a year) that will no longer be eligible to enroll in kindergarten.

RAISED BILL 6326: AN ACT CONCERNING THE RESPONSE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
AND THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO  
REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The State Department of Education (CSDE) strongly supports H.B. No. 6326, *AAC The Response of School Districts and the Departments of Education and Children and Families to Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect*, to improve the sharing of information relating to reports of child abuse and neglect by school employees between the Departments of Children and Families and Education and school districts, with minor technical changes.

The bill codifies the recommendations from a report of the Attorney General and Child Advocate entitled "*Protecting Our Children: Improving Protections for Children When Allegations are Made that*

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*School System Personnel Abused and/or Neglected Children*" dated July 8, 2010 concerning investigations of reports of child abuse and neglect in schools.

With that said, while CSDE adamantly supports completing a Child Abuse Registry check for all applicants for certification as outlined in this bill, it can only support this requirement if the Registry check can be completed electronically, as CSDE receives over 30,000 certification applications annually.

In light of the above, CSDE supports H.B. No. 6326 to improve protections for Connecticut's children by improving the information sharing relating to reports of child abuse and neglect by school employees between the Department of Children and Families, CSDE and school districts.

**RAISED BILL 6319: AN ACT CONCERNING HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS FOR KOREAN WAR VETERANS**

The State Department of Education (CSDE) supports H.B. No. 6319, AAC High School Diplomas for Korean War Veterans, to allow boards of education to award high school diplomas to veterans of the Korean War who left school early to enlist in the armed forces in service to their country.

Many of the men and women who served in the Korean conflict are approaching or are in their 80's. It would be a fitting tribute of their sacrifice by permitting a local board of education to honor their service with the award of a high school diploma. These individuals postponed a critical period of their educational experience in order to give service to our country. In fact if one were to review their specific training within the military it would correspond with courses allowed for secondary school credit.

Therefore, CSDE supports H.B. No. 6319, AAC High School Diplomas for Korean War Veterans because it will provide a deserved acknowledgment of individuals who gave a tremendous sacrifice in the service of their country.

**RAISED BILL 6325: AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE REENTRY AND EDUCATION**

The State Department of Education (CSDE) supports H.B. No. 6325, AAC Juvenile Reentry and Education, to require immediate enrollment of students who transfer from Unified School District #1 and Unified School District #2, to amend notification laws regarding student transfers from Unified School District #1 and Unified School District #2, and to amend the time requirements for expelled students seeking to reenter their previous school, with some suggested revisions.

For Section 1(e), CSDE recommends that the section begin with "Notwithstanding any other provisions of the statutes to the contrary..." as CSDE has concerns that schools could reassign these returning students under the provisions of Section 10-233k(a) where it identifies that the district can modify a child's educational plan or placement.

In addition, CSDE supports the concept that children, who have been placed at a detention center, Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS), or a residential placement after having committed an expelled offense, should be allowed to return to public school once they are discharged. CSDE believes the proposed language does not adequately distinguish between the types of placements children are

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returning from and the length of time they may be there; and therefore, does not balance between the child's right to return to school after having been out placed for a substantial length of time and the school district's need to be able to maintain safe schools for all students.

CSDE would recommend revisions to Section 3 of the proposed legislation. First, there needs to be a specific timeframe for the child to be in detention, CJTS or a residential placement that would preclude a district from expelling the student upon return from a facility. Second, if districts may expel students after they are discharged from a facility, the quality of the alternative educational program being offered must meet the needs of the student and enhance the student's ability to remain engaged and working towards completing their education. Language which would better define an "alternative educational opportunity" during the period of expulsion and specifically address the needs of students returning from detention, CJTS or a residential placement would promote the student being engaged educationally and reduce the likelihood that the student may commit another offense.

As such, CSDE supports Raised Bill 6325, AAC Juvenile Reentry and Education, with some suggested revisions.

**RAISED BILL 6385: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR CONCERNING EDUCATION**

The State Department of Education (CSDE) supports Governor's H.B. No. 6385, An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendation of the Governor Concerning Education.

**Section 10: Regional Transportation and Uniform School Calendars**

CSDE is very excited about engaging the RESC Alliance to study the feasibility of regional school transportation and a uniform school calendar. As established organizations that have promoted regional collaboration for over four decades, the RESC Alliance is the appropriate entity to bring districts and municipalities together to create regional efficiencies and savings.

Districts currently spend nearly \$400 million annually on mandated transportation. This proposal would allow the RESC Alliance to perform the following activities:

- Review existing district transportation contracts to determine and analyze:
  - Bidding practices
  - Costs
  - Contract structures
  - Timelines for renewal
- Examine costs and operational issues with those districts providing transportation directly through in-house operations;
- Examine the opportunity for RESCs to deliver regional services through existing transportation providers; and
- Assess the level of each district's interest to change its current transportation operation.

Like regional transportation, a uniform school calendar is an effort to save money without sacrificing educational quality. Rationales for a uniform calendar include:

- As the state continues to expand school choice options, aligning school calendars would substantially reduce transportation costs for each district.

**JOINT  
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**EDUCATION  
PART 2  
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**2011**

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## TESTIMONY OF CONNECTICUT LEGAL SERVICES, INC. IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL NO. 6325 AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE RE-ENTRY AND EDUCATION

Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. My name is Melanie Starks and I am a staff attorney with the Children-at-Risk unit of Connecticut Legal Services, Inc. (CLS). CLS represents families of children and youth who are having difficulty accessing educational and/or behavioral health services.

I am here today to urge you to support H.B. 6325, An Act Concerning Juvenile Re-Entry and Education. This bill would require (1) the enrollment of students transferring from USD #1 and USD #2 back to a local school district to be *immediate* and *to the same school the students attended prior to leaving*; (2) acceptance of credit for instruction at USD #2 schools; and (3) require districts to allow students to return from detention centers or residential facilities without expelling them for additional time.

When students leave CJTS, juvenile detention, or a residential placement, they face many challenges. They are moving, sometimes returning home to their families, sometimes not. In their attempts to get back to a normal life, they must deal with parole and probation officers, DCF workers, public defenders, and school administrators. As you would imagine, this is, more often than not, a difficult transition. In our work at CLS, we have seen firsthand the obstacles these students face when they are trying to return to school.

We have worked with students who were told upon return to their school districts from CJTS that the school they had previously attended was full and they must re-register with central office and would be placed at some other school in the district. Some districts require all students returning from CJTS or other residential placements to spend a period of time attending an alternative school before they are allowed to return to the school they previously attended. And finally, some students have returned to school only to face expulsion hearings. As the statute is drafted currently, a student who was in juvenile detention for 160 school days could then be expelled by his or her local school system for another 180 school days.

As you can imagine, these situations can be incredibly discouraging for students and their families. Where we are involved, we can help a student navigate these obstacles but for many students this can mean never getting back into school.



It is clear. When students face multiple barriers to school re-entry after an out of district placement they are likely to become discouraged and drop out of school entirely. Ultimately, if our goal is to encourage these students to finish high school, then we must not permit these types of artificial barriers.

This bill's purpose is to remove such barriers to re-entry for our state's most vulnerable students.

We therefore urge the Education Committee to support HB 6325, An Act Concerning Juvenile Re-Entry and Education. I thank you for your consideration.

TESTIMONY OF CARMEN GIBSON  
TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 6325,  
AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE REENTRY AND EDUCATION

February 23, 2011

My name is Carmen Gibson and I support Raised Bill No. 6325, An Act Concerning Juvenile Reentry and Education. Based on my experience, I believe that this bill is important to ensure that students are not discouraged from continuing high school.

I am a junior at Hartford High School. When I was in tenth grade, I went to placement at the Touchstone Program in Litchfield, Connecticut for one year. While at Touchstone, I attended school there and excelled in all of my classes. The curriculum was challenging, and seemed to pick up where my old school had left off. In the year I spent there, I received full credit in all of my classes, completing my eleventh grade year. When I entered Hartford High School this fall, however, I was told that my credits from Touchstone would not be counted, and I would have to repeat the eleventh grade. Additionally, it took several weeks for me to get the services I was supposed to receive because Hartford High told me that they did not have my records from Touchstone.

When I was told that I would have to stay back a year, I was both angry and upset. I had worked so hard at Touchstone, and I couldn't understand why my high school was completely ignoring all of that hard work. I did better academically at Touchstone than I ever had in my entire life, yet my new school refused to acknowledge my improvements.

Despite getting no credit for my work at Touchstone, I tried to make the best of the situation by repeating the eleventh grade at Hartford High School, so that I could eventually graduate. I have to say, though, that repeating this year has not been easy for me. It has been very difficult to find my place in a different age group of students. Because of that, school has been a very negative experience for me since I returned from Touchstone. I often find that when I wake up in the morning I get a lump in my stomach because of going to school. I never got those feelings before having to stay back. I used to enjoy learning and going to school and I hope that sometime in the near future I start to enjoy it again. School is so bad for me right now that I have considered dropping out on a number of occasions. So far, however, with my family and friends' support, I have been able to push myself to stay in school. I am working really hard to continue my education, but I understand why some students would be so frustrated that they would leave school.

I fully support Raised Bill No. 6325, An Act Concerning Juvenile Reentry and Education, because this bill will make sure that credits earned by students like me in placement are counted when they return home. I hope that you understand how important it is to help students like me continue our educations and stay in school.

Thank you for your time.

*Carmen Gibson*  
Carmen Gibson.

c/o Liz Reid  
333 Lyme St.  
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## Center for Children's Advocacy

University of Connecticut School of Law, 65 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, CT 06105

### TESTIMONY OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 6325 AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE REENTRY AND EDUCATION

February 23, 2011

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Center for Children's Advocacy, a non-profit organization based at the University of Connecticut School of Law. The Center provides holistic legal services for poor children in Connecticut's communities through individual representation and systemic advocacy. Through our TeamChild Juvenile Justice Project, the Center represents children in securing appropriate educational programming and improving academic outcomes by reducing high suspension, expulsion, and dropout rates.

We strongly support Raised Bill No. 6325, An Act Concerning Juvenile Reentry and Education, which will **improve educational outcomes for youth at risk of dropping out** after juvenile or criminal justice placements. While in placement, these youth attend school in the Unified School District #1 ("USD #1") and the Unified School District #2 ("USD #2").<sup>1</sup> Raised Bill No. 6325 will improve these youths' educational outcomes by ensuring that:

1. Students are immediately enrolled in school upon their return to the community;
2. Educational records follow students to receiving school districts by a date certain;
3. Students' credits earned while attending USD #2 are accepted by receiving school districts, just like the credits earned by students attending USD #1 currently are;
4. Students are allowed to return to the school they attended prior to placement, if grade level appropriate; and
5. Students do not face expulsion for the behavior that resulted in their placement.



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Students who return to the community from placement are at high risk for educational failure and dropping out. Many of these students experienced **significant educational failure prior to their placements** and, on average, are considerably below grade level in reading with high rates of special needs.<sup>2</sup> Stressors during their transitions to the community aggravate their past educational failure.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, **these students are much more likely to drop out**, and national studies estimate that more than 66% of these students do not complete high school.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> USD #1 provides educational services to youth in the custody of the Department of Corrections, while USD #2 provides educational services to youth in the custody of the Department of Children and Families. The Unified School Districts are subject to the same oversight by the State Department of Education as any other Connecticut school district. CONN. GEN. STAT. §10-15d.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Feierman, Jessica, et al., *The School-To-Prison Pipeline... and Back: Obstacles and Remedies for the Re-Enrollment of Adjudicated Youth*, 54 New York Law School Law Review 1115, 1123.

<sup>3</sup> Brock, Leslie and Natalie Keegan, *Students Highly At Risk of Dropping Out. Returning to School After Incarceration*, available at: <http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/resources/spotlight/spotlight200701b.asp>.

<sup>4</sup> See Feierman, *supra* note 2 at 1117.

**Failure to transfer records and credits in a timely manner exacerbates that risk.** Without records from a student's past educational placement, schools often do not provide appropriate educational programming, particularly for students with individual education programs. Additionally, failure to accept credits earned by students in placement encourages students to believe that their efforts in school have been futile. Moreover, these students often face barriers to enrollment or to returning to their prior school, which make them feel less connected to school.<sup>5</sup>

**Raised Bill No. 6325 is a no-cost way to reduce the risk of educational failure for these students.** Connecticut law already requires receiving school districts to request these students' educational records; Raised Bill No. 6325 only creates a clear timeline for that request. Connecticut law already requires receiving school districts to accept credits earned by students while attending USD #1; school districts should not incur additional cost for accepting credits for coursework already completed by students while attending USD #2. Connecticut law already requires receiving school districts to promptly enroll students; Raised Bill No. 6325 just makes that standard explicit.

Although Raised Bill No. 6325 is a good start towards these goals, it should be amended to **apply the same timeline for receiving school districts to notify USD #1 and USD #2 of a new student's enrollment as for other districts**, so that this timeline is two days regardless of the school district the student last attended. Raised Bill No. 6325 should also be amended to **clarify that students can waive the right to return to a prior school**, if they do not think that attending a different school is in their best interest.

By reducing barriers to educational transition, ensuring that students' educational programming reflects the progress that they have made while in placement and promoting school connectedness for transitioning students, Raised Bill No. 6325 will help achieve better life outcomes for Connecticut's youth. For the foregoing reasons, we urge the committee to pass Raised Bill No. 6325.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Hannah Benton  
Staff Attorney  
TeamChild Juvenile Justice Project

<sup>5</sup> Research shows that children who are connected to school tend to have higher grades and test scores and are also less likely to exhibit aggressive or self-destructive behaviors. See, e.g., Blum, Robert, *School Connectedness Improving Students' Lives*, available at: [http://www.jhsph.edu/bin/i/e/MCI\\_Monograph\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/bin/i/e/MCI_Monograph_FINAL.pdf).

**TESTIMONY OF JOHN GILL,  
DIRECTOR OF JUVENILE JUSTICE SERVICES,  
CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY PROGRAMS OF CONNECTICUT,  
TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 6325  
AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE REENTRY AND EDUCATION**

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Students returning to community schools from juvenile and criminal justice placements are at an extremely high risk for educational failure. Before these students enter placement, they tend to have high rates of special needs and reading levels significantly below grade level, which puts these kids already at risk for dropping out.

While returning to community, these students encounter further problems that greatly increase their risk of educational failure. When these students try to enroll, they often face administrative barriers which result in a delay of their enrollment. Such a delay not only diminishes a student's sense of connection to school, but it can also reduce his or her desire to return to school since the student may believe that the district does not want him or her back.

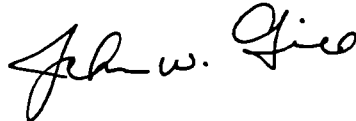
Even when students are able to enroll, these students continue to face barriers to academic success. First, because educational records are not always transferred immediately from their prior placements, these students often do not receive the services they need to receive in school. This causes students to become very frustrated with school. Second, students can be crushed by the refusal of their community schools to accept credits earned while attending the Unified School District #2 (USD #2), which educates kids in juvenile justice placements. This refusal encourages a student to believe that hard work in school is not rewarded, which makes it more likely that a student will decide to drop out. Particularly since school districts are required to accept credits for students who are educated in Unified School District #1 (USD #1) while in criminal justice placements, it does not make any sense to deny students credits earned while in USD #2. Third, students who face discipline for the behaviors that led to their juvenile justice placements may also develop a sense of futility. While in placement, these kids have worked on accepting responsibility for their actions and on preventing future involvement with the court system. To be excluded from school for that same behavior feels like their progress is not valued.

Raised Bill No. 6325 provides solutions to these problems. Raised Bill No. 6325 requires the immediate enrollment of students leaving placement and that these students receive credits for their school work completed in placement. Because this bill clearly outlines the timeline for requesting records from prior educational placements, it speeds up the process for students to receive the services they need to thrive in the classroom. Finally, students will not be excluded for their prior behavior, behavior that has already been addressed through their placement in the juvenile or criminal justice system. All of these provisions combine to improve

the educational transition for students returning from placement, making them more likely to remain in school.

This bill is a great start to achieving these goals, but it can be improved by two small amendments. First, the bill currently creates two timelines for receiving school districts to request educational records: one timeline when the prior school district is USD #1 or USD #2 and another for any other school district. This should be amended so that the timeline is two days regardless of the prior school district. What would be even more efficient, and beneficial for students is if the student entered their new placement with their educational record. Thorough review of the record at registration time would make scheduling and planning efficient. Second, for a variety of reasons, students and parents may decide that attending their prior school is not in their best interest and they should be able to make a decision, in consultation with the school district, that an alternate school placement is necessary. This decision should be based on student grade, special interest and skills, and availability.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John W. Gill".

JOHN W. GILL



TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT JUVENILE JUSTICE ALLIANCE  
FOR THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

February 23, 2011

Supporting

**HB 6325: AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE REENTRY AND  
EDUCATION**

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee: This testimony is submitted by Abby Anderson, executive director of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance (Alliance) Steering Committee. The Alliance is a statewide, non-profit organization that works to reduce the number of children and youth entering the juvenile and criminal justice system, and advocates a safe, effective and fair system for those involved.

**The Alliance supports House Bill 6325 which would require Connecticut school districts to accept the academic credits that children earn within the Department of Children and Families school district (Unified School District #2) in the same way that they must accept credits from any youth re-entering the district from another school, including the Department of Correction's Unified School District #1. This bill also requires schools to immediately enroll students transferring back from the justice system.**

We know educational success and stability improve a child's chances for long-term community success. Now, educational reentry that happens quickly and ensures the child receives credit for the work he or she did in the juvenile justice system is not assured. Our partners who work with students in this situation on a daily basis tell us that it is rare. This legislation clearly defines the role and responsibilities of the justice system and the local or regional school districts in helping children reenter school.

The proposed change for USD #2 academic credit is of no-cost and is non-controversial; it is simply correcting an oversight. Without a guarantee of credit acceptance, students can return to their home school from a long-term placement thinking they have earned enough credits to be a junior, and instead be told that their credits won't transfer and they are still freshmen. This unfair situation creates frustration and a likelihood of dropout – which increases the risk of further delinquency.

The Alliance also supports this legislation's proposed changes regarding expulsion of students who are returning to a school district having been in juvenile detention, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School or another residential placement. Now, students sometimes face a double jeopardy situation. When they attempt to return to school, the district tells them that the expulsion hearing for the act that originally sent them into the justice system has been held in abeyance and instead of reentering school they are now beginning to serve their district imposed expulsion. This punishes a child twice for the same offense and further disconnects him or her from the school community and increases the chances that the child will drop out. Research shows that youth who drop out are more likely to be arrested than their graduated peers.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like additional information.

4-12  
5-

## State of Connecticut

### DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTINE PERRA RAPILLO  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER**

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
FEBRUARY 23, 2011**

**RAISED BILL NO. 6325 AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE REENTRY  
AND EDUCATION**

The Office of the Chief Public Defender supports passage of Raised Bill No. 6325, An Act Concerning Juvenile Reentry and Education. This bill increases a child's chance at successfully reintegrating into the community after being placed at a DCF facility. The proposal requires that a student will be able to speedily reenter their school when leaving a DCF or Department of Correction facility. It mandates timely provision of educational records to the receiving school when a child transfers from one district to another and ensures that all children receive credit for work done at schools run by DCF. Similar language is contained in Raised Bill No. 846, An Act Concerning the Transfer of Educational Credits. The bill also improves a child's chance for school achievement by requiring a school district to count his time in placement towards a suspension or expulsion based on the behavior that led to the child's placement. The Office of the Chief Public Defender believes that adoption of this language is essential to ensure that children who reenter school from a DCF facility are given the best chance of succeeding.

Section 1 will require a school district to immediately enroll a child who is leaving Unified School District # 1, which includes all Department of Corrections facilities or Unified School District #2, which includes schools at all facilities run by the Department of Children and Families. Immediate school attendance is critical to a child's success when reintegrating into the community after a being removed by the child welfare juvenile justice or criminal justice systems. Students and families find it difficult to navigate local school board bureaucracy, and it is too easy for local schools to dissuade children from returning to school by making it difficult for them to re enroll. Study after study shows that children who attend school and are engaged in

Committee on Education  
February 23, 2011  
Testimony of Christine Rapillo  
Page 2

their education are much less likely to return to the child welfare or criminal justice systems than their counterparts who drop out. A requirement that schools immediately enroll kids returning from state facilities will encourage the schools to work with the state agencies responsible for the child's reentry to plan for a successful return.

Section 2 speeds up the transfer of records between school districts, including USD #1 and #2 when a student transfers. These records are critical to educators who are responsible for creating a child's educational plan and must be moved with all reasonable speed between the sending and receiving school. Children should not have to wait weeks for records to arrive before they are placed in appropriate educational programming.

Section 2 also ensures that students leaving USD#2 will receive credit for work done while in placement with DCF. Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-220h already requires school districts to grant credit for work done while a student is enrolled in Unified School District #1. This must be expanded to give the same credit to children in returning home from a commitment to DCF. The State of Connecticut spends thousands of dollars educating children who are placed at DCF facilities and thus attending schools run by Unified School District #2. However the children are often denied credit for course work done at the Connecticut Children's Place, Riverview Hospital or the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS). These children often make significant advances while attending school in a facility. For example, the average child committed to CJTS gains a full year of academic progress in reading and math while committed to the facility. Credit transfer for work done in these facilities should be mandatory and automatic. Children returning from DCF facility should clearly be accorded the same educational rights as youth reentering the community from the Department of Corrections.

Section 3 eliminates double expulsion for children who are sent to the Connecticut Juvenile Training School. Some children are committed to DCF and placed at CJTS or another facility for a crime that also carries the possibility of expulsion from school. Some school districts are holding off on expelling students until they attempt to return to school after serving their commitment. These are students who have already been removed from the school community by the court, usually for a full school year. Students who are returning home have received treatment and rehabilitation and need to be able to attend school to continue their positive progress. It is simply not fair to allow schools to hold off on an expulsion while a child serves his or her sentence and use it later to exclude him or her from school upon release. The expulsion and the sentence should run at the same time. It is always the goal of the juvenile justice system to return the child to the community as a successful and productive member. This cannot happen if the child is excluded from school upon release.

The Office of the Chief Public Defender urges passage of this bill and thanks the committee for raising these important issues.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2011

S.B. No. 930 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SCHOOL ENTRANCE AGE.

Recommend approval of the bill as written. The bill would change kindergarten age beginning 7/1/12 so that much younger (4 year olds) and older (7 year olds) would not be starting school at the same time. Right now schools have a tough time teaching kids who can range in age from 4.5 to 7 years. SDE would like additional School Readiness funding for students in poorest communities so they could get the additional preschool year in this transition period. Since there is no recommended funding for this we should oppose this if it is added to the bill!

H.B. No. 6326 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RESPONSE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

This is the right thing to do school personnel, including prospective teachers, should be vetted to make sure they do not have a history of abusing children. For administrative flexibility both from the local school district and State Department of Education perspective inquiries to the Child Abuse Registry should be available electronically. If they are not, the bill's implementation should be tied to availability of electronic data sharing.

S.B. No. 933 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS.

This allows a superintendent of local schools to request that the bachelor's degree requirement for substitute teachers be waived. SDE is fine with this if limited. Neutral for OPM; no fiscal impact expected.

H.B. No. 6319 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS FOR KOREAN WAR VETERANS.

There are Korean War veterans who left high school to serve their country. As we have done for similar groups of World War II veterans, it seems a fitting tribute to allow a local board of education to award these folks their high school diplomas (albeit sixty years later).

H.B. No. 6324 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER EMPLOYMENT CRITERIA.

This bill would require, for school districts which do not have layoff provisions in their contracts, to develop layoff procedures which do not put seniority as the primary reason for determining who gets retained and who gets laid off. While this appears to

HB6325  
HB6385  
SB932  
SB929  
HB6320  
HB6318  
SB1025



be consistent with some of Governor Malloy's statements on this subject, it does also touch on an arbitration ruling (for Hartford) that was released on 2/17/11. The Hartford superintendent sought empowerment to lay off more senior teachers while retaining less senior educators in specialty schools. According to the *Hartford Courant*, "a three-member state arbitration panel said it believed that such a system would give school principals too much power in deciding which teachers to lay off, including those with tenure."

H.B. No. 6325 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE REENTRY AND EDUCATION.

The issue here is one of safety. While every student has a constitutional right to a free and appropriate public education, there are instances when the student could be a danger to himself or others if he attends a regular public school. This bill requires juveniles who come right out of the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS) to be immediately admitted to their former high school, even if it is not the most appropriate or safe option. The SDE is correct that a more judicious approach is needed not to exclude these students from their rightful educations but to make sure the setting is the most appropriate one for the student, his peers and other school personnel.

H.B. No. 6385 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR CONCERNING EDUCATION.

Going forward, some language might require additional tweaking. For instance, the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) might need adjusting depending on final education budget.

S.B. No. 932 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF SEVERE NEED SCHOOL FOR PURPOSES OF THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST GRANT PROGRAM.

As written, this bill has problems and could be more of a disincentive for districts to participate in the School Breakfast program (and it could eliminate current participants from the program due to onerous reporting requirements). Suggest significant re-write with fiscal impact statement done for state and towns.

S.B. No. 929 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS OF SCHOOL NURSES.

This additional school nurse credentialing language, while important and well-meaning, could make it more difficult for school districts to attract and retain school nurses. In urban districts, particularly, and in many others as well, school nurses are primary care providers for students. They see the gamut from child abuse to pregnancy to behavioral issues in addition to the normal childhood sicknesses. There can be a lot of burnout and stress related to these jobs. Adding these academic and professional development requirements (especially with a 7/1/11 implementation) without giving time for the profession to adjust could have the unintended consequence of driving experienced and caring health professionals out the schools in which they work.

**H - 1101**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2011**

**VOL.54  
PART 10  
3113 - 3437**

will take a tally. And the Clerk, will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 6312 as amended by House "A".

Total Number voting 143

Necessary for passage 72

Those voting Yea 143

Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 8

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Bill is amended as passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 192.

THE CLERK:

Calendar 192, on page 40, substitute for House Bill Number 6325, AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE REENTRY AND EDUCATION. Favorable report of the Committee on Human Services.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The distinguished Chairman of the Education Committee, Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Question is on acceptance and passage. Will you explain the bill, please, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Certainly, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this good measure before us is intended simply to make sure that children who are coming out of Unified School District number 1 or number 2, number 1 being the school district for our Department of Corrections, number 2 being our school district for our Department of Children and Families, are able to reenroll in their schools in a speedy fashion.

There are children who have the constitutional right to an education in our state who are being unreasonably, unduly delayed in getting back into their schools, and this bill would address that problem in a very straightforward manner directly parallel to the manner that we have employed for Unified School District number 1 in a bill just a couple years ago.

So I hope the whole Chamber will join me in supporting it just as the entire Education Committee did in a bipartisan manner just a few months ago.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on this bill? Will you remark further on this bill? If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take your 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.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Have all the members voted? If so, the machine will be locked. The Clerk will take a tally. And the Clerk, will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill Number 6325.

Total Number voting 141

Necessary for passage 71

Those voting Yea 141

Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 10

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The bill is passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 46.

**S - 632**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2011**

**VOL. 54  
PART 21  
6546-6914**

mhr/cd/gbr  
SENATE

501  
June 7, 2011

Madam President, move to place the item on the  
Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Also, calendar page 16, Calendar 532, House  
Bill Number 6338.

Madam President, move to place the item on the  
Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Moving to calendar page 17, where we have  
several items. The first: Calendar 533, House Bill  
Number 6325.

Madam President, move to place the item on the  
Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

mhr/cd/gbr  
SENATE

520  
June 7, 2011

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call's been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call's been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CLERK:

Madam President, the items placed...

THE CHAIR:

I would ask the Chamber to be quiet please so we can hear the call of the Calendar for the Consent Calendar.

Thank you.

Please proceed, Mr. Clerk

THE CLERK:

Madam President, the items placed on the first Consent Calendar begin on calendar page 5, Calendar 336, House Bill 5697.

Calendar page 7, Calendar 421, Substitute for House Bill 6126.

Calendar page 8, Calendar 449, Senate Bill 1149.



mhr/cd/gbr  
SENATE

521  
June 7, 2011

Calendar page 10, Calendar 470, Substitute for House Bill 5340. Calendar 474, Substitute for House Bill 6274. Calendar 476, House Bill 6635.

Calendar page 12, Calendar 499, Substitute for House Bill 6638. Calendar 500, House Bill 6614. Calendar 508, House Bill 6222.

Calendar page 13, Calendar 511, House Bill 6356. Calendar 512, Substitute for House Bill 6422. Calendar 514, House Bill 6590. Calendar 515, House Bill 6221. Calendar 516, House Bill 6455.

Calendar page 14, Calendar 517, House Bill 6350. Calendar 519, House Bill 5437. Calendar 522, House Bill 6303.

Calendar page 15, Calendar 523, Substitute for House Bill 6499. Calendar 524, House Bill 6490. Calendar 525, House Bill 5780. Calendar 526, House Bill 6513. Calendar 527, Substitute for House Bill 6532.

Calendar page 16, Calendar 528, House Bill 6561. Calendar 529, Substitute for House Bill 6312. Calendar 530, Substitute for House Bill 5032. Calendar 532, House Bill 6338.

Calendar page 17, Calendar 533, Substitute for House Bill 6325. Calendar 534, House Bill 6352.

mhr/cd/gbr  
SENATE

522  
June 7, 2011

Calendar 536, House Bill 5300. Calendar 537, House  
Bill 5482.

calendar page 18, Calendar 543, House Bill 6508.

Calendar 544, House Bill 6412. Calendar 546,  
Substitute for House Bill 6538. Calendar 547,  
Substitute for House Bill 6440. Calendar 548,  
Substitute for House Bill 6471.

Calendar page 19, Calendar 550, Substitute for  
House Bill 5802. Calendar 551, House Bill 6433.  
Calendar 552, House Bill 6413. Calendar 553,  
Substitute for House Bill 6227.

Calendar page 20, Calendar 554, Substitute for  
House Bill 5415. Calendar 557, Substitute for House  
Bill 6318. Calendar 558, Substitute for House Bill  
6565.

Calendar page 21, Calendar 559, Substitute for  
House Bill 6636.

Calendar page 22, Calendar 563, Substitute for  
House Bill 6600. Calendar 564, Substitute for House  
Bill 6598. Calendar 566, House Bill 5585.

Calendar page 23, Calendar 568, Substitute for  
House Bill 6103. Calendar 570, Substitute for House  
Bill 6336. Calendar 573, Substitute for House Bill  
6434.

mhr/cd/gbr  
SENATE

523  
June 7, 2011

Calendar page 24, Calendar 577, Substitute for  
House Bill 5795.

Calendar page 25, Calendar 581, House Bill  
6354.

Calendar page 26, Calendar 596, Substitute for  
House Bill 6282. Calendar 598, Substitute for House  
Bill 6629.

Calendar page 27, Calendar 600, House Bill  
6314. Calendar 601, Substitute for House Bill 6529.  
Calendar 602, Substitute for House Bill 6438.  
Calendar 604, Substitute for House Bill 6639.

Calendar page 28, Calendar 605, Substitute for  
House Bill 6526. Calendar 608, House Bill 6284.

Calendar page 30, Calendar number 615,  
Substitute for House Bill 6485. Calendar 616,  
Substitute for House Bill 6498.

Calendar page 31, Calendar 619, Substitute for  
House Bill 6634. Calendar 627, Substitute for House  
Bill 6596.

Calendar page 32, Calendar 629, House Bill  
5634. Calendar 630, Substitute for House Bill 6631.  
Calendar 631, Substitute for House Bill 6357.  
Calendar 632, House Bill 6642.

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SENATE

524  
June 7, 2011

Calendar page 33, Calendar 634, Substitute for  
House Bill 5431. Calendar 636, Substitute for  
House, correction, House Bill 6100.

Page 34, Calendar 638, Substitute for House  
Bill 6525.

Calendar page 48, Calendar 399, Substitute for  
Senate Bill 1043.

Calendar page 49, Calendar 409, Substitute for  
House Bill 6233. Calendar 412, House Bill 5178.  
Calendar 422, Substitute for House Bill 6448.

Calendar page 52, Calendar 521, Substitute for  
House Bill 6113.

Madam President, that completes the item placed  
on the first Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

We call for another roll call vote. And the  
machine will be open for Consent Calendar number 1.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll on the Consent  
Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the  
Chamber. The Senate is now voting by roll on the  
Consent Calendar, will all Senators please return to  
the Chamber.

mhr/cd/gbr  
SENATE

525  
June 7, 2011

Senator Cassano, would you vote, please, sir.

Thank you.

Well, all members have voted. All members have voted. The machine will be closed, and Mr. Clerk, will you call the tally?

THE CLERK:

Motion is on option Consent Calendar Number 1.

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Total Number Voting         | 36 |
| Those voting Yea            | 36 |
| Those voting Nay            | 0  |
| Those absent and not voting | 0  |

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar Number 1 has passed.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

We might stand at ease for just a moment as we prepare the next item..

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)