

PA 11-136

HB6499

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**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**EDUCATION
PART 3
673 – 986**

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Second, I wanted to note that we had a deadline of noon on Friday for the submission of written testimony, and it turns out we received whole bunches of testimony via e-mail over the weekend. Materials that were not submitted by noon on Friday were not necessarily run off and made available to members because we had a deadline, and just as in school, when you have a deadline for a paper, it's hard and fast. So it is at the Education Committee. So, if you submitted something on Saturday or Sunday and you don't see it distributed in written form, it's because the Committee needed to respect its deadline in order to get the printing done.

With that, I think we're ready to get our Public Hearing under way. We'll start off with public officials, and then we'll move to the public. The first public official signed up to speak is James McGaughey, and we welcome him, and I'll observe that all folks who are testifying will be subject to a time limit today, and you'll hear the bell go off when the three minutes are up.

With that, Mr. McGaughey, we welcome your testimony.

JAMES D. MCGAUGHEY: Good morning, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Committee. My name is Jim McGaughey. I am the Director of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, and I'm here to offer comments on three bills that are on your agenda today: Raised Bill 1105, An Act Concerning Special Education; Raised Bill 6501, An Act Concerning Delays in the Evaluation and Determination Process for Students Suspected of Requiring Special Education Services; and, Raised Bill 6499, which makes minor revisions to the education

Recent scientific developments have pretty much indicated that even very small quantities of lead can have serious neurological effects on developing children, so it's something that being prepared to remediate is really important.

With respect to Raised Bill 6501, clarifying the responsibilities of school districts to promptly pursue consent for relevant evaluations, I think this is a response to -- to what is called RTI, response to intervention, which is a requirement now in federal law, that various attempts of interventions be made prior to referring somebody for special education evaluations.

Generally a good idea, but the problem is it can be used to delay evaluations for students where there is an obvious need for those evaluations, and that there is no conventional intervention that's likely to work.

The example I cite in my testimony is somebody who has phonological processing problems because they are unable to distinguish between the sounds of certain word chunks. There are particular special education approaches that can help students like that. To make them wait six months or nine months while there are attempts, ineffective attempts made to intervene when that's what they need, really just frustrates everybody, and that student falls further behind. So, I would encourage you to support that bill as well.

And then as I mentioned, Bill 6499, sections that identify or that would give credit, academic credit, as a foreign language for students studying American sign language, there's a lot of interest in high schools and at the university level in learning ASL, but

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there have been barriers in trying to enroll students in those kinds of programs and set up those programs. The absence of credit is one of the principal barriers, so I would urge you to support that as well.

And, that's all I have to say, so if there's any questions, I'd be happy to try and answer them.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you very much for that clear testimony. Are there questions from members of the Committee? Representative Lavielle?

REP. LAVIELLE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, and thank you for your testimony.

I have a question for you on the bill regarding the delays for admitting someone to special education, and I have actually been spoken to by a number of my constituents about this. It is certainly a concern, and I support the efforts to deal with it and expedite it.

HB6501

I just have sort of a technical question for you, which is do you have some suggestions for criteria for determining when something is absolutely without question a cause for putting a student into a special ed program?

JAMES D. McGAUGHEY: No. The process envisioned in law of identifying somebody for special -- as eligible for special education and related services is something that results from a team recommendation following any number of different kinds of evaluations, and it's up to the team to determine which evaluations are appropriate for that particular student.

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but also, hopefully, professionally gratifying for them, and I would encourage it.

SENATOR SUZIO: Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Chairman.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Other questions for the Commissioner? If not, thank you, Commissioner, and I would just ask that someone from the department stay around because there will be plenty of comments on some of the bills that you've commented on, and I think it's important for the department to hear that. Thank you.

We're past the first hour for public officials, so we're going to go to our first student who's testifying, then to Representative Baram. The student is Izzy Kornman to be followed immediately by Representative David Baram.

IZZY KORNMAN: Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Izzy Kornman, and I'm a tenth grader at Hall High School in West Hartford.

I'm here to talk about why I support the sections of Bill 6499 (inaudible) on education in Connecticut public schools.

I'm also the granddaughter of two Holocaust survivors. In almost two years in public school, I have approximately five days on Holocaust education during freshman year. If Hall can teach every incoming freshman, approximately 400 'teens each year, there is no reason that anyone else should not be able to.

Between 1938 and 1945, more than six million Jews were massacred. In addition to these

innocent souls, five million others were targeted and slaughtered because they were not up to Nazi standards. To most people, those are just numbers. For those seven years, Jews were just numbers, stripped of their names and their humanity. Now those victims of a horrific race cleansing are becoming numbers once more, passed over in school systems nationwide.

My grandmother, Irene Frisch, and my grandfather, Eugene Frisch, are not just numbers. They are people. They are survivors. Three generations on from the Holocaust, approximately one in three Americans does not even know what the Holocaust was or when it took place. Thirty-three percent of U.S. citizens are shockingly unaware of one of the most gruesome massacres in recorded history. Now with the number of survivors dwindling, it is more important than ever to pass a law mandating the study of the Holocaust.

In addition to the fact that people should know about the Holocaust for what happened there, people also need to learn about it to realize how easily it happened. Heather Bentley, an expert on Holocaust study, asserted that horrible things have happened, are happening, and will continue to happen if peace and tolerance are not taught. It is imperative to see the Holocaust not only as an historical event, but use it as a tool for teaching about the ideas of intolerance and what is necessary for society to survive. Without a state mandate, students will be going out into the world without this invaluable information. If all students like me are taught the lessons of the Holocaust, we will not be able to be silent in the face of other mass killings wherever they take place.

This mandate is not just about the teaching of the Holocaust. It is much more than that. It is a doorway to talk about the ethics of genocide. The Holocaust is not one of the most enjoyable subjects, but it is essential to know about. Otherwise, it will surely happen all over again -- the racism, genocide, the horror. Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it. Teenagers like me are the future of our state and our country. If we are not taught about the atrocities of our past, we will not be able to recognize them in the future.

Never again? The world promised it would never allow a mass genocide like the Holocaust to happen again. Look at Darfur. Look at Uganda. Genocides are happening right now. Who is going to stop them? Without knowledge of the Holocaust, tomorrow's world leaders will not be able to comprehend the severity of the situation.

Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. May I say it speaks incredibly well of your family and your teachers and your upbringing that you're able as a tenth grader to come here and speak so beautifully and eloquently on such an important topic.

Are there comments or questions from members of the Committee? Senator Stillman?

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Izzy. We're very pleased to have your testimony today as someone who is certainly familiar with the topic. It's what you're asking for us to do is change this from being -- in law from being a may, you may

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teach it, to you shall. Is that correct?

IZZY KORNMAN: Yes.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Okay. Thank you. I was just looking for some clarification and to let people know that it already is taught in many of the schools. It's just you would like it to be taught everywhere. Thank you, and we do appreciate your testimony and understand its vital importance. Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Other questions from members of the Committee? Senator Bye?

SENATOR BYE: Izzy, I just want to really thank you for coming, and I have one quick question.

How many times in your education in West Hartford would you say you've had a lesson about the Holocaust or genocide in Darfur and other places?

IZZY KORNMAN: Well, I went to Solomon Schechter for a while, and it's obviously a bigger subject there, so from that, I don't even know if I can count them, but in about a month at Schechter, I was learning as much about the Holocaust as I have in two years in public school. It was a shock.

SENATOR BYE: Have you heard about it in public school, though?

IZZY KORNMAN: A little bit in modern world. I don't think it was spent as much time as it could have been.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. And, how has it changed you, understanding the Holocaust? Obviously, you have a deep understanding; you know your grandparents lived through it.

IZZY KORNMAN: I think it makes me a more compassionate person, and also makes me more aware of things in the world.

SENATOR BYE: All right. Well, as my colleague from West Hartford, Representative Fleischmann, said, we're really proud to have you here today, and we thank you for your testimony.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Any other questions? If not, thank you very much for your time and thoughts.

IZZY KORNMAN: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: We now go to Representative David Baram, and he will be followed by Harvey Corson.

REP. BARAM: Good afternoon, and thank you, Chairpersons, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. If I knew that Izzy was going to speak before me, I probably would have just had her read my testimony as well, she was so eloquent, but I, too, am here to support that portion of H.B. 6499 which encourages school districts to include Holocaust and genocide studies in their curriculum.

While I believe that this should be mandatory, I think this is a good first step, and I hope that the Committee will look at opportunities to make it mandatory in the future.

As you probably know, five states -- Florida, New Jersey, Illinois, California and New York -- already mandate Holocaust and genocide studies. Some of the reasons given, which I think are also pertinent to Connecticut,

include that the Holocaust was a watershed event that impacted the entire course of human history, involving unimaginable atrocities that resulted, as you heard, in the murder of six million Jews and over five million others based on prejudice and racism.

It also teaches students about the root causes and effects of prejudice and racism. It teaches about man's inhumanity to man and how remaining silent, apathetic and indifferent when people are subjected to genocide is dangerous. It talks about the institutions of democracy and freedom and how we must maintain those institutions and how governments that are corrupt can manipulate hatred and prejudice, thereby inciting the society to foster these acts of hatred and murder and discrimination. And, again, emphasizing the importance that modern nations must work together to promote tolerance, plurality, and diversity as inherent principles of a free society.

It also creates a self-identity and esteem among students so that they can strengthen their own sense of responsibility and moral obligation.

It is true that several school systems in Connecticut have already implemented Holocaust and genocide studies. My home town of Bloomfield is a good example. Through the efforts of its performing arts and music director, Dr. Olzacki, a program for his music and arts students was implemented which includes a curriculum that involves a trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. And, in fact, one of our African-American students in Bloomfield, Raymond Clark, was so inspired by these studies that he wrote a composition, a musical composition about the Holocaust that

has been played by many musicians including the Yale Orchestra, and this experience has been remarkable and written about by The Hartford Courant and Hartford Magazine as a testament to what can be done.

So, I'd like to conclude by saying that I hope that at some point we can mandate Holocaust/genocide studies. We have many school systems, five states, other institutions including the Dodd Center at UConn, which houses the Nuremberg papers of former Senator Thomas Dodd, that can give us guidance as to a curriculum.

And, I'd like to conclude by quoting Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, lecturer and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, who said: I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.

I thank you for your support.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for your testimony. Are there questions for Representative Baram? If not, thanks for your testimony and your advocacy.

We go now to Harvey Corson to be followed by Mary Silvestri.

HARVEY J. CORSON (through the Interpreter):
Good morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, Co-Chairs, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you and the Committee members about the Raised Bill H.B. 6499.

I am Dr. Harvey Corson, retired educator, Vice

President of the Connecticut Association of the Deaf, and a Core Member of the Statewide Committee on American Sign Language as a World Language.

Today, I am speaking in reference to the need to update the statute, Chapter 164, Section 10-16b. In 1989 this education state was enacted to provide a mechanism for an elective course, sign language, to be offered to secondary students for credit under Language Arts. Some twenty years later, we find that Connecticut is the only state that considers sign language as part of Language Arts. According to research, this view is outdated.

This proposed revision would enable Connecticut to be in line with the majority of the states, especially in the Northeast, in terms of offering the American Sign Language as part of World Language electives available to secondary school students.

This proposed revision reflects current research and acknowledgment that the American Sign Language is a language in its own right, not a form of English or part of Language Arts. As of March 2010, 166 colleges and universities accept American Sign Language as a foreign or world language. Accordingly, the phrase, quote, or Signed English, end quote, in line 17 on page 2 in the proposed bill should be deleted as part of the updating process.

This revision would provide current and future secondary students the opportunity to select American Sign Language, if offered, as one of world language electives to learn about the language and culture of deaf and hard of hearing people. This may also provide career exploration and preparation for future college

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students interested in working with deaf and hard of hearing children and adults in various careers such as teachers, interpreters, counselors, health care professionals, social workers, and researchers.

Thus, the pool of needed professionals working with this population would be maintained or increased.

Recently, the USA Today and the New York Times newspapers in their December 8, 2010 editions, reported that American Sign Language is the fourth most studied foreign language on college campuses according to the 2009 triennial survey conducted by the Modern Language Association. Furthermore, the same survey mentioned the American Sign Language increased more than 16 percent from the year 2006, reflecting the growing acceptance of American Sign Language to meet college foreign language requirements and its usefulness as an employment credential.

This would be one of the possible positive outcomes of the proposed legislation.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this proposed revision.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for your testimony, and may I say I was surprised when I learned that American Sign Language was not already considered a world language since in my own mind, it already had that status, so I'm hopeful that we will be able to move in this direction.

Are there questions from members of the Committee? If not, thank you, Dr. Corson, for your fine testimony.

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HARVEY J. CORSON (through the Interpreter): Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Mary Silvestri to be followed by Linda Pelletier.

MARY SILVESTRI: Madam Chair, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Education Committee, my name is Mary Silvestri, and I live in Danbury. I am a deaf mother of three grown deaf children who graduated from the Danbury public school system. I have been a certified teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing in the Danbury area for 34 years and have taught American Sign Language at Danbury High School for 15 years.

I support the section of Raised Bill 6499, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes, which would classify American Sign Language as a foreign world language as part of the program of instruction in our public schools.

Upon reading the bill, I would suggest two minor changes: American Sign Language should be capitalized and signed English should be taken out.

Before explaining my reasoning for classifying ASL as a world language, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my legislators, Senator Michael McLachlan and Representative Joseph Taborsak, and their aides, Adam Chiara and Kelley Fournier, for all their help in bringing this matter to your attention. They listened patiently to our concerns and guided us through the legislative maze.

The reason for my supporting the minor change in Raised Bill 6499, which involved no added burden to the state budget, is that the

statute needs to be updated to recognize ASL as a world language and not as part of language arts. Most importantly, ASL is considered a language in its own right by linguists.

Teaching ASL in the public schools benefits everyone. Some of my ASL students have gone on to become interpreters, special education teachers, and regular education teachers. I also often bump into former students in my community who then sign to me. Every year in my ASL class, I have students telling me with great excitement that while working, they were able to communicate with a deaf customer. So, ASL is a language that can be used immediately in the community.

Although I am already a certified teacher, I have taken additional training to become a qualified ASL teacher. This involved completing a 15-hour program on ASL teaching sponsored by SLIP, a state ASL teachers' group, joining ASLTA, a national ASL teachers' group, and earning a second level of ASLTA certification, traveling to Virginia for a four-day workshop on using an ASL textbook, which I have here with me, attending a workshop in Connecticut on Foreign Language National Standards as applied to ASL, and most recently taking core ASL teaching classes at Columbia University and receiving an ASL curriculum for high school students.

All my training and experience as an ASL teacher, a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing and deaf individuals lead me to believe the statute should be updated to classify ASL as a world language.

Thank you for allowing me to present my testimony at this hearing.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, and may I say it is your right as a resident of Connecticut to be able to come before us in testimony, so you need not thank us for that. We thank you for all of your time and effort.

MARY SILVESTRI: Okay. Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Are there questions or comments from members of the Committee? If not, thank you so much for your testimony and all of your work in the schools.

MARY SILVESTRI: I have some papers here that I could distribute to all of you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Our staff will take those and distribute them to the Committee.

We move to Linda Pelletier to be followed by Linette Branham.

LINDA PELLETIER: Madam Chair, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Dr. Linda Pelletier. Thank you for allowing me to speak after my colleagues so that we could utilize the interpreters and they can interpret for my testimony as well. They're my dear friends and colleagues.

I live in Union. I also teach at the University of Connecticut. I'm also a freelance sign language interpreter. I want you to be aware that ASL is my first and native language. Both my parents are deaf.

I support the section in Raised Bill 6499 for the same reason as Dr. Corson and Ms. Silvestri. In addition to what they shared, I wanted to also include that over the past thirty years, there's been a lot of factors

that have contributed to the interest in American Sign Language. I also wanted to add that since the introduction of IDEA, individuals with disabilities act, and PL94-142, they're intended to integrate deaf and hard of hearing students into the public mainstream environment, and in doing so, what has happened is that the deaf children have also brought American Sign Language and deaf culture into this environment, and that has spurred the interest was well.

I currently teach at the University of Connecticut. The University of Connecticut recognizes American Sign Language as a legitimate language. It also offers it for credit, and it is able to be used as -- students can take ASL to satisfy their graduation requirements for a foreign language.

The University of Connecticut offers five levels of American Sign Language, also four courses in deaf studies, and again, as I mentioned earlier, not only have deaf and hard of hearing students been integrated and brought with them their language, American Sign Language, but I also want to speak on behalf of other children who have parents who are deaf, like myself, that they would lose this opportunity if ASL is not recognized. It was a missed opportunity for me, and I hope it's not a missed opportunity for them.

And, one final note that I would like to make -- and I'm not sure if it's known -- but on February 15, 2011, less than a month ago, both the Senate and the House in the state of Virginia voted overwhelmingly in favor of House Bill 1435, the recognition of American Sign Language as a foreign language. The bill has passed the House 95 to 3, the Senate 34 to

6, and it's enrolled to Governor McDonnell for his signature.

The Richmond Times stated that previously the Governor did not take a position on this bill, and it is expected that he'll sign it. Virginia will be the 35th state to recognize American Sign Language for credit and as a language.

It's my hope that the state of Connecticut will follow this trend as with the majority of states in recognizing American Sign Language and ultimately become the 36th state to honor American Sign Language as a foreign language.

Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, and I'm sorry to hear that the state of Virginia got out front of us on this one. We are competitive here in the legislature. Any comments or questions? Senator Suzio?

SENATOR SUZIO: Kind of a comment question, I guess. I happen to have a nephew who's autistic, and my sister has had much great success communicating with him using sign language versus the spoken word. I'm wondering, is there much research on that?

LINDA PELLETIER: There is, and it's -- that's not (inaudible), but yeah, there is, and there's a lot of interest among children who are not deaf or hard or hearing to utilize American Sign Language to not -- not necessarily in the means of becoming bilingual, but to advance their English literacy skills, and there is recent action that shows that it is a benefit to hearing children who are exposed to sign language. The visual language is a different mode with which young children can

communicate, and it's shown to actually advance their English literacy skills as well.

SENATOR SUZIO: Thank you very much.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Other questions?
Representative Lavielle?

REP. LAVIELLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your testimony.

Just one question. Are there sufficient similarities between American Sign Language and other varieties of sign language that would facilitate inter-- should I say international or inter-cultural communication between people who are fluent in two different, again, if dialect is the right word?

LINDA PELLETIER: I want to be sure I understand your question clearly.

Understand that American Sign Language is not universal. Other countries have their own sign systems, so British sign language is nothing like American Sign Language. French sign language is not like American Sign Language (inaudible).

Are you speaking to other sign systems here in the United States?

REP. LAVIELLE: No. I was curious as to whether an additional merit of this might be that it would facilitate -- if there were sufficient similarities, which apparently there aren't, whether it would facilitate communication among people who could otherwise not communicate with each other.

LINDA PELLETIER: You've got me thinking on that

one. So, in other words, are there methods or ways in which people who are deaf have a means of communicating outside of American Sign Language?

REP. LAVIELLE: No. All I was trying to do was to find out whether there was an additional argument on top of the very good ones you've already made for that -- if you were fluent in American Sign Language and you were fluent in, say, Spanish sign language, would you be able to communicate, whereas if you were two people who were fluent only in the two verbal, oral languages, you could not.

LINDA PELLETIER: No. There's -- they're entirely distinct languages.

REP. LAVIELLE: Okay.

LINDA PELLETIER: The other thing I forgot to add is because of the interest at the University of Connecticut, there's a wait list for the ASL courses. As a result, there are now courses being offered for interpreter training and education so that folks like we have here will be trained to work as sign language interpreters. Because that is significant, I just wanted to add that one little piece as well.

REP. LAVIELLE: Thank you very much. It's interesting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Any other questions for the witness? If not, thank you very much for your time and effort.

We go now to Linette Branham to be followed by Iris Heidar.

LINETTE BRANHAM: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman,

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-- excuse me -- if they so chose. Is that fair to say?

DACIA TOLL: It is. I think the challenge I would want to think through with the Committee is that right now, we are not supposed to hire a teacher unless they are certified, so I think this gets back to the probationary status question.

I think in an ideal world we would be given, I would think, two years in part because you really want two years of data. That's what we do, two years of data before we make a determination, a final determination regarding a teacher, and so I do worry even with this statute how we will negotiate the window of time while they're proving effectiveness unless, of course, as it indicates with Jeff and Matt, many of their teachers, they have proven effectiveness in other environments, and then I would hope that would be eligible.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Gotcha. Sounds like a (inaudible).

Other questions from members of the Committee? If not, thank you very much for your testimony and all your good work.

DACIA TOLL: Thank you. I also have our teacher evaluation, one page on it, that I will be happy to share with the Committee as well.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: That would be terrific.

DACIA TOLL: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Well now hear from Rabbi Philip Lazowski followed by Jo Ann Lutz.

PHILIP LAZOWSKI: Good afternoon, members of the

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Education Committee.

I am Rabbi Philip Lazowski, one of the Senate Chaplains, and a Holocaust survivor. I am here to support House Bill 6499, quote, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes, end of quote.

I understand the language in this bill will now include that our state supports the option of our schools to teach genocide education in addition to already the option to teach Holocaust education. Frankly, I would hope that this Committee if not this year will definitely look at the other states which mandate the teaching of the Holocaust and genocide education like Florida, New York, New Jersey and Illinois.

I do speak to many schools and firmly believe I leave students with not only the knowledge of what happened during this terrible time in our history, but also a message of hope, determination and how to live a good and meaningful life.

If the state would make Holocaust education part of the curriculum in the United States history, then I do believe a number of foundations will help fund teacher training. The models of good curriculum already exist from ADL and also from the University of Hartford and Facing History and Ourselves. Some of these curriculums may even be downloaded at no cost to teachers.

In summary, I have seen low income and in some cases troubled students in Bloomfield schools. African-Americans and Caribbean-Americans benefit greatly from the teaching of Dr. Joe Olzacki in regards to the lessons of what happens to people when their identities are

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destroyed. I even have had mothers call me to tell me when I come to the schools and speak and talk to students, their child has changed to a better student and a better person.

Thank you, and I would be happy to answer any questions if you like.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, Rabbi, for your testimony, for your service to the state, and for your willingness to share your story with students so that they're able to put a human face to something that may be abstract and distant to them before you show up in their classroom.

Are there questions? Senator Stillman?

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Rabbi, it's very nice to see you again today, as always, and I thank you for your reminding all of us the importance of our history, and we hope that you will be around for many years to continue to remind us. And, I just want to say I agree. I believe it should be mandated as well. I think there are several curriculum that are addressed in that part of the statute, and I think in this day and age are not expensive to institute in schools, and I think we miss an opportunity when we don't encourage more strongly by mandating something. I truly think the students, children, are missing out on important history lessons, so your testimony is not falling on deaf ears. It's just depends how many people we can convince along the way.

So, thank you again for all you do and for being here today.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Any other questions? If not, I

have one follow-up for you, Rabbi.

It has been suggested to members of the Committee that one way of gaining the attention of school systems and making sure that they're aware of the importance of this topic would be on the CAPT test, which is given to 10th graders, that there be at least a few questions related to genocide so that on the standardized test that every 10th grader is taking, they would know they'd have to answer some questions about that topic.

I'm just interested to know what your reactions to that proposal might be.

PHILIP LAZOWSKI: Well, when we teach about genocide, we teach -- we include not only about the Holocaust itself, we include what's happening in Africa and Rwanda, et cetera, et cetera. So, I was hoping that -- and the school systems that emphasize science, math, history but not the history of what's happening during the past -- you see, we teach only things that are very important, but I think we have to teach something about morals, about ethics, about humanity, what it means to be a good human being, and you know, there's so many goings going on in schools, if they would know how people suffer and how people went through in life, they wouldn't do these things, and there wouldn't be so many gangs.

I have experienced many things when I talk to students. First of all, they've never heard about the Holocaust. I spoke to 400 kids in the University of Connecticut they brought in from all of the high schools in the area. They looked at me like I'm a stranger. I told them I'm a Holocaust survivor, and they just said what's a Holocaust survivor.

So, we live in modern times. We have to learn, also, about human beings, what they go through in life, and when they go through in life, they would have a better understanding how to deal with other people. It's a race, but we have to learn how to deal with other people in a human way, and I think teaching about genocide, teaching about the Holocaust I've experienced myself that they read my book, Hidden Destiny, and I ask the students to write three page -- three pages about what they learned. Then we took them to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, and these people I saw crying that they never cried before in their life, and when they came home, they never looked at the television any more.

A mother calls me, and she tells me, Rabbi, I just want to tell you, the child changed; he started to do homework; he started to do certain things which he never did before.

Now, of course, you know, another eight, ten years, there wouldn't be no Holocaust survivor to tell the story. I am one of the youngest that survived the Holocaust, but I feel that since I'm still alive, that it should be mandatory like other states to -- at least, to teach what went on in those terrible days and what's going on today. If people would know, would care, and we like people to care, like people to share, and that is the issue.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Senator Boucher?

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Rabbi, for being here.

I do believe that you have a very important message and a very important point with this bill. I think if there ever was one where we actually could consider a mandate when

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everyone is running away from the war right now in education, this would be the subject that we should -- it's absolutely unconscionable to think that we don't teach history without teaching this greatest aspect of the Second World War beyond even a war situation, but also about a human experience.

I must tell you that my concern is, like you, that there even are individuals today that may not accept the fact that something like this could have conceivably happen, and that's my worry, that with time there would be more and more attitude to not consider that this event actually occurred.

So, thank you for that. Much appreciated.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for that comment, Senator. Other questions? Hearing none, thank you, Rabbi, for your time and your testimony.

PHILIP LAZOWSKI: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Next up is Mary Loftus Levine, and then following her again, utilizing the discretion of the Chairs, we'll hear from Dr. Joe Olzacki, who I understand has a class he must teach shortly.

MARY LOFTUS LEVINE: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. I'm Mary Loftus Levine. As you probably know by now, I'm the director of policy and professional practice for the Connecticut Education Association representing 40,000 educators in our strong public schools.

We've been working collaboratively -- you have my testimony. I'm going to summarize quickly.

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they had to refinance their building loan when the committed funds did not materialize, and in the meantime, they continue to make payments and accumulate interest and delay important renovations.

Another delayed measure is the complete listing of the enrollment cap, a temporary -- and a temporary reinstatement of an 85-student per grade cap. This is extremely problematic since we already have schools which have exceeded this cap in the meantime.

And, lastly, I'd like to point out that if all schools in Connecticut including charters were part of one sensible, integrated funding system that focused on education rather than on education delivery systems, none of these regressive measures would be needed to try to contain costs which, again, we realize is paramount in this budget cycle.

So, thank you all for your time and attention.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for your testimony. Are there questions for the witness? If not, thank you.

And, as mentioned before, Dr. Joe Olzacki has a teaching commitment, so he'll be going next, and then also in recognition of people's time constraints, following him will be Mara Whitman to be followed by Peggy Roell.

JOSEPH A. OLZACKI: Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Joseph Olzacki, and I'm director of visual and performing arts for the Bloomfield public schools.

I am here to testify in support of House Bill 6499 as a minor revision. I believe that this is a first step that, hopefully, leads to a

mandate that Connecticut schools teach Holocaust and genocide education as it is witnessed in the states of Illinois, California, New York, New Jersey, and Florida.

Presently I serve as the district director of visual and performing arts for the Bloomfield schools in Bloomfield, Connecticut. As the director of this district-wide department, I not only administer the arts programs, but have also initiated and included issues of human rights and genocide throughout the district curriculum.

I have spoken on the issue of genocide education state-wide, and I recently lectured on the subject for UNESCO in Kigali, Rwanda, as part of the national human rights conference. We need your help and leadership in addressing the passive nature of our history curriculum in high schools in regards to Holocaust and genocide and human rights education. It's a very basic ideology.

Since the dawn of time, every culture has experienced the degradation of their humanity whether it is by slavery, servitude or ethnic cleansing. As an educator and as a passionate advocate for human rights, it is a shame that the state of Connecticut needs a law mandating inclusion of Holocaust/genocide education in the history of social studies curriculum in Connecticut high schools in order to instruct on this very vital material.

Each year, as you just heard from Rabbi Lazowski, countless Holocaust survivors pass away. With their passing goes an incalculable amount of wisdom and knowledge of the Holocaust of the last century. The heroes of World War II. are dying out as well, yet we will not forget their sacrifices because it is

part of our American history curriculum.

British statesman, Edmund Burke, shakes a noble finger at us through his state: Those who do not know history are destined to repeat it. The Holocaust of World War II. witnessed over 11 million lives lost. In Rwanda, in 99 days, 800,000 Tutsis were slaughtered because they were not of the right ethnic group, and in Darfur, millions of lives have not yet been completely accounted for. If we do not educate our young people to understand the signs and symptoms that are precursors to genocide, then the world may yet again be allowed to repeat it.

After World War II., the term, never again, ran across the world. If we do not educate our young people in sacrifices and lessons of the Holocaust, they will never know what occurred. They will not know what never again meant. The atrocities are so outrageous, it is unbelievable to fathom how man can be so inhumane to his own species.

And, I'll just end with this. First they came -- as you've all heard this, I'm sure, before -- first they came for the Communists, and I did not speak out because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak out for me.

This is not the model that I want for my children, the kids that I teach. This is not a model that I want for future generations of children in this state, in this nation or in this world. You on this Committee can speak out for my kids.

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REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, Joe, for that eloquent testimony and for all the work you've been doing in the Bloomfield schools.

Are there questions from members of the Committee? Senator Stillman?

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. Thank you very much. I appreciate your testimony and, again, your program.

Have any other schools in the state reached out to you in terms of using your program as a model?

JOSEPH A. OLZACKI: Well, actually, through the -- through Yale University because we have a partnership because of the identity project, which we ask every student what happens if -- sorry -- what happens if someone strips you of everything that makes you you. That's the basic premise, and what Rabbi Lazowski was referring to was the program where we teach students how important their individual identity was.

The U.S. State -- the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Bronx as part of Yale University's rap for peace program has taken our program, and it's used in different -- we've heard from Baltimore; we've heard from Chicago; and, we've heard from -- we met with the U.S. Attorney from the Bronx.

As a result of the Courant article that was yesterday, I've heard from Colorado, I've heard from East Hartford, and I've heard from Granby, and I also heard from New Haven, people asking me and actually applauding the fact that we're standing up, we're saying something about this very important issue.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. I hope as this moves forward -- and I did see the article in the newspaper; it was a pretty good article and certainly outlined your program. I hope that more schools will look to you as a model because apparently it's working.

JOSEPH A. OLZACKI: Senator, I just wanted to make -- I brought a world history text with me today just to show -- I know you are all very, very busy, and I don't want to prolong this, but in this world history text which was only printed a few years ago, there are two pages on the Holocaust. There's nothing about Darfur, and there's nothing about Rwanda in this brand new text. So, if we don't do it -- I'm the arts director of a decent size school district. If we don't reach beyond what we normally would expect students to learn, then nobody else will do this. We need to mandate it, and this bill is the first step of a mandate.

And, what you said before is 100 percent true. We need to step out; we need to mandate these things, because if we don't, these students -- my students are African-American and Caribbean-American students, some of the brightest and best kids I've ever taught. They don't know. I had a student listening to a conversation who said to me, Doctor, what is this Holocaust thing; is that when a bunch of people died?

I went to Rwanda. I saw the (inaudible), the genocide memorial. My students, African-American students, didn't know what this was. Who teaches them? Unless we mandate it like in California or Illinois or in New Jersey or New York, why do they have it and we don't?

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SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much, and thank you for being one of those really special teachers. We appreciate it.

JOSEPH A. OLZACKI: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Other questions? Representative Srinivasan to be followed by Representative Johnson.

REP. SRINIVASAN: Thank you, Chairman.

This course that you're suggesting, which I fully agree is very important for students to have, I fully agree with that, could you give us an idea as to the length of time that you think this would take in a curriculum and what would it replace, given the fact there's only limited time that the student has in the classroom?

JOSEPH A. OLZACKI: This could be woven as part of the world history or American history. Granted, it's a stretch for American history, but that could be included for the Holocaust survivors who are American citizens now.

As part of world history, I learned it in 8th grade with a man -- with my teacher in the East Hampton public schools that taught us this over two and a half weeks, yet I not only learned what I had to learn when it came to other parts of world history such as ancient Greece or modern history, I went on to get I felt a multidimensional education that not only tied in what was going on in the Holocaust, but tied in how I needed to be a more responsible citizen by paying attention to what the signs and symptoms are of trouble across the world.

Whoever thought a music person who went on to be an administrator in a school district would be speaking in Rwanda. I mean, to get off the plane and to see -- and the first thing they wanted, the people wanted to see how much they have changed, but I hadn't known that. I hadn't been there. I could not communicate to my students through pictures and stories about people who reached out to me and said don't let them forget. That's what I heard. I heard it no matter where I went. Professor Omara Otunnu from UConn, who is the UNESCO chair for human rights -- we're lucky to have him in the state -- lectures on this quite often, on how we have to dig outside the box, and that's part of what you've been hearing today, is that Rabbi Lazowski, who is in his eighties, comes into my classroom, into my school, and I'm responsible for the entire district for the arts, but we reach across because students don't realize how important their identity is. Then what's to say someone, whether it be gang violence, whether it be someone in a shopping mall takes away that part of them, and that's the beginning of a genocide, the beginnings of when someone tries to take something so inherent from you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Representative Johnson?

REP. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for your very, very eloquent testimony today.

I just wanted to know the other states that have already passed this law mandating the inclusion of this education, how did those states come about passing a law requiring that, and how long do you think it took, if you have some of that information?

JOSEPH A. OLZACKI: What I was able to do -- and I think the Chairs both have a copy of this, and

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I left it with the Clerk -- you have not only the states who have the law, but also the key wording in that law.

Just the phone calls that I made through J-Fact and also just some of my meager phone calls when I found out this Committee hearing was so quickly, what I found out -- this was very quick; it was a matter of a year to two years -- but, again, it was -- you know, we talked about unfunded mandates. This is -- this does not need to be an unfunded mandate. This is something that's common sense. If our students don't know about something that's in the world that's so inherent to human life, then we are deemed to repeat it.

If we don't teach them to reach out beyond what they see, then they will go into the north end of Hartford with a lack of expectation about their personal identity. That's my fear. I don't want to go to funerals any more.

REP. JOHNSON: Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Are there any further questions? Senator Boucher?

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and you pick up a very good point because oftentimes when we get requests for inclusion of something in the curriculum, everyone does shout that it's an unfunded mandate, or that we are being prescriptive on the school's allowing them that kind of control because taken to its extreme, you could pretty much rewrite a whole textbook and mandate that they teach different aspects of the text.

But I think, as you said, this rises way above

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that, that, in fact, if it isn't currently being taught in the history class, in a world history class, then shame on the school district. This should be automatically included. We shouldn't have to revisit it, and if we do, then putting this into law won't be really a hindrance or a mandate on any of the districts, that they should have already been doing it.

So, I concur with you fully, and I think it's something, hopefully, that we can get our Committee to support and raise.

JOSEPH A. OLZACKI: Well, Representative Fleischmann made a comment to Rabbi Lazowski which was having a few of these questions put on the (inaudible) desk. As -- one of my degrees is in political science, and as American foreign policy tells you, you can have all the treaties you want, but if you don't have verification, then the treaty's not worth anything.

And part of this -- and I hate to call this a treaty, but if you have one, two or three questions on the CAPT test, you're not only asking a student what he knows about a specific occurrence, whether it be Darfur or Rwanda or the Holocaust, you're asking him to think outside the box, to think of how does this pertain to me. When my students walked into the Holocaust Museum with Rabbi Lazowski -- and we had to raise over \$100,000 to make five plane trips with Bloomfield students to the Holocaust Museum -- I had two of the toughest kids walk up -- and I'm not going to use their language -- but say they weren't kidding, this is awful. They got it. Do we?

SENATOR BOUCHER: As you said, this is integral to the part of history that should be learned,

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and your suggestion about a question or two may be a very good one.

Thank you very much.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Are there any other questions? If not, thank you for your testimony and for all your good work. I just want to say I find it chilling that Rwanda is not mentioned in that book in front of you. Next month will mark 17 years since the genocide in Rwanda, so that's chilling testimony to have slowly the writers of textbooks --

JOSEPH A. OLZACKI: I was asked back, to go back by the government to come back and to teach their teachers how to teach music. How is that (inaudible), but, you know, I'm going back there for ten days this summer.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you.

Mara Whitman to be followed by Peggy Roell. And, Mara, if you had indicated that you had brought your students with you, we would have moved you up. We always try to have students get, you know, first shot at testimony, so just in the future --

MARA WHITMAN: They're not my students.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Your children. Bring your children. You are their mother and their teacher. So, anyhow, I just -- for you to know and for anyone else in the audience today who has children with them, children always get priority here at the Committee, so you should just let the Clerk know that you have children with you, and they will go early. With that, please go ahead.

MARA WHITMAN: My name is Mara Whitman. I live in

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faced due to years of delay based on a response to failure model.

It is important that this bill be amended to reflect Connecticut's Response to Intervention program and now allow RTI to be a cause or excuse to delay or deny evaluations and appropriate services to children with learning disabilities.

I urge you to support Raised Bill 6501 with the aforementioned amendment included.

And, I thank you for your time.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much for your testimony. Any questions? Thank you.

Martin Mador? We'll go on to Annmarie Hillman.

ANNEMARIE HILLMAN: Good evening, Senator Stillman and members of the Education Committee. My name is Annemarie Hillman, and I'm a policy fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children.

I'm here tonight to testify in support of changes to the truancy statutes as proposed in H.B. 6499. I have three main points about these changes.

First of all, Connecticut Voices for Children strongly supports the proposal that would require family with service needs petitions to be filed within 30 days of a parent or guardian's failure to cooperate with a school's attempts to reduce a student's truant behavior.

This is not a huge change to current law, but rather incorporates a time line to current law and helps children get services as soon as

possible to keep them in school. This is especially important given that truancy is a significant risk factor for drop-out delinquent behavior and school failure.

A few weeks may seem like a reasonable delay to an adult, but it is critical for a teen who is struggling with social, academic, and emotional problems. Secondly, Connecticut Voices for Children strongly supports the proposed requirement that a truant students parent or guardian be mailed a letter noting the legal consequences of unexcused absences.

It is crucial that parents understand the seriousness of the situation and that if they're unaware of this behavior, they be brought on board to maximize the student's ability to receive services as soon as possible.

Lastly, although we support these proposals, we believe that they could be amended to better support the needs of these students and their families. First of all, we suggest that instead of requiring school districts to file petitions within 30 days of a parent or guardian's failure to cooperate, that they file this petition within five to ten days.

Secondly, we suggest that instead of just mailing a letter home, that you mail a letter home in English but also if the student speaks a different primary language at home, that the letter be mailed in that language as well, and this is especially significant because, for example, Latino students experience significantly disproportionate rates of absenteeism.

So, thank you for the time to testify tonight, and again we strongly support these changes to

the truancy statutes and encourage the Committee to consider our proposed amendment. Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. Any questions? Thank you.

Beth Johnson followed by Kathryn Meyer.

BETH JOHNSON: Good evening. My name is Beth Johnson, and I'm here to speak on the fourth section of Bill 6499.

I am currently a 5th and 6th grade teacher at North Canaan Elementary School, which is a part of the Region 1 School District. We are a K-8 school with just over 300 students. I recently obtained my Master's degree in educational technology and was working towards a (inaudible) position in my school, but because I hold a K-6 certificate through the state, I was told I could only teach the position K-6.

There's no educational technology certifications, so when I inquired with the State Board of Education what I could do to teach all of the students in my school, I was told that I could get a Master's degree in library media specialist or I could get a 7-12 degree in English, which was my major for my Bachelor's. Neither one of these make me more qualified to teach educational technology.

Section 4 of the bill would make it so that if you obtain a degree in a specialty area, you can teach the area K-8 in a smaller school such as my own. There are currently 95 K-8 schools in the state of Connecticut, and many of these positions are held by people who hold a K-8 teaching certificate, which is no longer available through the state of Connecticut, so

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as people retire with this K-8 certificate, I think that this problem is going to become more prevalent and especially for schools like my own. We certainly can't afford to have two teachers to hold this position, especially one to cover two grades.

I thank you for your time.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. I'm very sorry for your problem. I wasn't even aware that there are no longer going to be any K through 8 certifications. I assume it's going K through 12.

BETH JOHNSON: K-6 and then 7-12.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Oh, but in different areas?

BETH JOHNSON: Yes. There's no -- there's no certification right now for this specialty area.

SENATOR STILLMAN: You mean 7 to 12?

BETH JOHNSON: Uh-huh.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Interesting. Thank you. Questions?

Thank you for bringing that to our attention. We might have to look into that, but we'll see what happens with the bill. You've certainly raised a new concern based on some previous testimony, so thank you.

BETH JOHNSON: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Kathryn Meyer to be followed by Tim Oslovich.

KATHRYN MEYER: Good evening, Senator Stillman, and

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members of the Education Committee. My name is Kathryn Scheinberg Meyer. I'm an attorney at the Center for Children's Advocacy.

I'm here to testify in support of Raised Bill 6499 as it will substantially reduce truancy rates by enabling truant students to obtain access to services more quickly.

We support this bill for the following three reasons. First, currently schools are required to file FWSN's, Families with Service Needs petitions, after the failure of parental participation to remedy the problem of truancy. However, schools often fail to do so until students have racked up many more absences than are required to find a student as truant, and they're not held accountable for this failure, so a clear time line would clarify expectations for the school system.

Secondly, because of the delay in filing, students may not even access services until far into the school year, as late as spring or even summer. Commissions and programs that help truant students have testified to the fact that it is far more difficult to engage students so late into the year, especially when their programs are designed to work with and within the school systems.

Thirdly, by mandating schools to file FWSN's within a certain number of days of the failure of parental participation and community intervention to alleviate the absences of an identified truant student, truant students will be able to access (inaudible) and other agency services much sooner than the current delayed system of filing, and these services include referral to family support centers, educational advocacy, mental health services, after-school programs, parenting classes, and

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other supports.

In addition, CCA urges the Education Committee to adopt the following amendments which would strengthen the bill and address continued deficiencies in the truancy system.

First, change the number of days schools have to file the FWSN from 30 to 15 calendar days. Second, require schools to discuss the need to refer the truant student to a planning and placement team meeting at the first meeting with the parent upon a child becoming truant as is already required by the child (inaudible) laws, state and federal laws, and regulations.

And third, require schools to report their truancy reduction efforts to the State Department of Education, and require the State Department of Education to coordinate all Connecticut truancy programs so that they can collaborate, work together, and identify what are best practices for identifying the issue, the leading issue of truancy.

In summary, we believe that requiring schools to file FWSN's within 15 calendar days of a student becoming truant will result in the prompt provision of services for children who desperately need help. We believe that the truancy provisions in Raised Bill 6499 in addition to our suggested amendments will achieve this goal.

Thank you for your time.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. Questions?
Thank you.

Reverend Oslovich, you're on.

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TIMOTHY OSLOVICH: Good evening, Senator Stillman, distinguished members of the Committee. I'm here to testify in favor of Raised Bill 6499, specifically the provision that would add genocide education to the list of specific topics for which the State Board of Education would be required to provide curriculum.

My name is Tim Oslovich. I am a pastor and also the volunteer chairperson of the Connecticut Coalition to Save Darfur, an organization that works to raise awareness about genocide and to end genocide.

My testimony is a little bit different than the eloquent words that Izzy, the young woman, offered testimony earlier, or Rabbi Lazowski or Dr. Olzacki. I'm not an educator or a student, but I am a concerned citizen. I am somebody for whom genocide matters and ending genocide matters, and really, you have the power to shape the future.

In 1994 when the genocide was ongoing in Rwanda, I was clueless about these things and didn't even pay any attention to it. But, thankfully, in the intervening time, I was exposed to some education about genocide, about what people could do to prevent it, and so for the last five years, I've been deeply involved in advocacy on behalf of the people of Darfur and Sudan.

Most people in Connecticut do seem to know about what happened in Darfur. Most people seem to be concerned about it. We've had a lot of good response of people reaching out to their elected leaders to help things happen, and there has been some success. However, the situation in Darfur, as you know, is still abysmal and much more needs to be done.

You have the ability to shape students so that they will be more aware of the history, that they'll be aware of what happened during the Holocaust, what happened in Rwanda, what happened in Darfur, and their hearts will be open to make a difference, to stop these things from happening in the future.

This bill is an excellent first step toward making that happen. I encourage you to take this first step and in the future to consider a mandate. I know that many of you feel that that is an appropriate thing. Both privately and here at this hearing, you've said that, and I deeply appreciate that, and I'll just end with a very brief story.

I was able to go to Rwanda and be a part of a conference on reconciliation there after the genocide, and I visited a Ntarama church, which is a genocide memorial. Thousands of people's bones are there along with remnants of their lives including one little red sippy cup with blood stains on it, and I saw that sippy cup and I couldn't help but think of my own daughter, and that that child who died in that place was just as previous as my daughter or your daughter or your son, and you have the ability to start to shape the world so that that never happens again.

Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, sir. I would say your testimony was just as eloquent as everyone else's and certainly just as passionate about the issue, and thank you for waiting all day to share your thoughts with us and explain the importance of this bill. It was really very touching.

Any questions (inaudible).

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TIMOTHY OSLOVICH: In three minutes, not bad for a preacher.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Yes, yes. We're even more impressed now, so thank you so much.

TIMOTHY OSLOVICH: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Joseph Vaverchak, Vaverchak? The second one is it. Okay. Followed by Terry Drew. Thank you, Terry, for having an easier name. I appreciate that.

JOSEPH VAVERCHAK: Good evening, Senator Stillman and members of the Education Committee.

This testimony is submitted in favor of Bill 6499 which reduces truancy rates by enabling truant students to obtain access to services more quickly by mandating schools to file families with service needs referrals within 30 days of the failure of parental participation and community interventions to alleviate the absences and identify truant students.

Truant students will be able to access Connecticut's support service divisions and other agencies, and one of those agencies in particular is what just started up in New Britain I call our family support centers. I have been working with family support centers now since the inception and have found some good success stories already.

Again, these referrals to the family support centers originate from a school referral, a family with service needs from a school referral to Juvenile Court. The Juvenile Court is the body that has to submit that person to get to the family support center,

which I look at as one-stop shopping for a lot of our kids with mental health issues. Very successful. There's numerous reasons why kids are falling behind the cracks in truancy, and mental health issues are a very big part of that.

My name is Joseph Vaverchak, District Supervisor of Attendance/Residency in the McKinney Vento Homeless Liaison for the Consolidated School District of New Britain, Connecticut. I'm writing this testimony in support of Bill 6499, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes.

I have worked with truant students since 1996. I have been involved in attending truancy committees since 1998 starting with the state of Connecticut task force on truancy. Following this, I co-chaired the Governor's prevention program on truancy. Our district is a member of the Consortium on School Attendance coordinated by the Office of Policy and Management. I also was part of the Families with Service Needs Advisory Board co-chaired by Martha Stone and Preston Britner, a board that worked very diligently to propose new legislation in the area of truancy, which initiated the original bill that preceded this recommendation.

I believe that diverting truant children from Juvenile Court is very important, and diversion should be put in place. In order to enforce these diversions, school districts should be held accountable for developing and implementing policies and procedures that involve parents and the community in a process to improve attendance and divert children from the courts.

If parents are not engaged in the process, I

strongly believe there should be a timeline in which schools should be filing a family with service needs referral. The mandate to file a family with service needs referral in a timely manner will enable truant students access to CSSD and other agency services much sooner than the current delayed system of filing, resulting in greater likelihood of school success, including lowering the drop-out rate. By not mandating family service need referrals be filed in a timely manner, we are perpetuating the likelihood that truants will not return to school, and this will happen.

We know and we speak often that early intervention is the key to success, yet my experience has been that despite significant efforts on the parts of districts to engage parents in the process of addressing truancy, for varying reasons we often find ourselves without their support. Requiring families with service needs referrals to be filed within 30 days of attempts to involve parents is vital to finding and using other avenues for interventions.

In conclusion, I am in strong support of Bill 6499, which would create a clear timeline for the filing of FWSN's and hold schools accountable for that timeline.

We're losing a lot of our kids without question. I see this on a daily basis, not only in New Britain, Connecticut, but I have had experience with other school districts across the state. There's reasons, many reasons why children are truant; there's many reasons why children drop out of school.

We need to access every resource we have as quickly as we can to get the services needed for these kids. Again, it's just not children

waking up the next morning and saying I don't want to go to school today. There's reasons behind it. There's roots to all of these problems, and that's what we need to get to. And, again, early intervention is the key. We talk highly about it, but a lot of times it doesn't happen. I hope in this bill, it will.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, sir. We appreciate it, and thank you for the work you do.

Anyone have any questions? Yes, Representative Johnson?

REP. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for your testimony today.

You mentioned that you had some dealings with homeless, with the homeless in your town.

JOSEPH VAVERCHAK: Very much so.

REP. JOHNSON: And, do you think that perhaps in some circumstances children who are homeless are more vulnerable to truancy and that sort of thing?

JOSEPH VAVERCHAK: The major part of the McKinney Vento federal law is to address that, and yes, there are. We find with homelessness it's just not maybe a one-time situation where a child is, as we call it, doubled up with another family. They could be bounced around three, four, five times. All of this is going to add to that: Their socialization, their lack of confidence in school, these are some of the roots that would keep a student staying away from school and becoming a truant problem. That's where the schools really need to be more involved, to identify those kids immediately so they can access the services that they need. Include teachers; provide

after-school homework, tutoring, that type of things. There's a lot to be done with the homeless population, and it's a growing population, especially for the homeless youth.

REP. JOHNSON: So, you did identify some of the things that should be done, but in terms of having a child ready to go on transportation or find the directions to school from, say, a homeless shelter or some of the new locations --

JOSEPH VAVERCHAK: All that is part of the McKinney Vento federal act. As long as the child is identified as homeless, they have the right to return to the origin school. Say, for example, a student was in New Britain, Connecticut; the family was evicted and ended up in Hartford. Mom still wants that child to return to the origin school, which would be in New Britain. New Britain would provide transportation or split that transportation cost with Hartford. Free lunch is also part of that, and also we attempt -- it's not mandated, but providing services for that student such as I said tutoring after school, homework help, that type of thing.

REP. JOHNSON: So, how are they identified? Say a child becomes homeless and moves to Hartford. How does the parent know that they can have the child continue in the same classroom?

JOSEPH VAVERCHAK: Well, that is where a lot -- well, parents come in for registration, secretaries, there's workshops, the laws that need to be followed. If the parent comes in, and parents sometimes, you know, they'll just say to the secretary I don't live here, I live here, this is what's happened to me. Then the secretaries have to address it to move forward to get the services for the kid.

Each case is different. Sometimes you find out from -- in the school setting that a child is homeless from kids talking, saying Johnny's living over here. A lot of times the parents will just come forward and say, you know, I've been evicted. A lot of times parents are afraid to speak up because, say, they get evicted and they go to live with someone in Section 8 housing. They're now putting that family in jeopardy of them also losing their housing, so this becomes a roller coaster where you really try as hard as you can to try to get to the root of this problem.

Last year in New Britain alone, I identified over 300 cases (inaudible).

REP. JOHNSON: So you had approximately 300, and what percentage of that is the school population?

JOSEPH VAVERCHAK: Our school population is probably about ten thousand five.

REP. JOHNSON: Do you have any idea how many homeless children there are state-wide?

JOSEPH VAVERCHAK: I don't have the official numbers. There are statistics and data out there. Each school district is responsible to have a homeless liaison and to address the laws that's supposed to be addressed, so numbers should be all reported to the state.

REP. JOHNSON: Thank you for your testimony. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Representative. Any other questions for the gentleman? Thank you, sir.

Terry Drew? Is Terry Drew here? Okay. We'll move on to Maria Lamb.

MARIA LAMB: Good evening. My name is Maria Lamb. I'm the program director for the family support center in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and I'm here providing testimony to support the Raised Bill Number 6499.

One of the family support center's main responsibilities is to work with the families with service needs truancy-referred clients in order to enhance their academic functioning by increasing school performance, attendance and at times, behavior.

The first reason why it is important to institute a timeline for FWSN filing by schools is because it will ensure students get access from our services more quickly.

Part of what we do in our family support center is that we have an educational consultant that pretty much deals with all the truancy students or the clients that are beyond control who have significant school issues. We provide them services that could range from a variety of different things. We can PASS; we can do -- which is promoting adolescent skills and strengths. It's an eight-week (inaudible). We teach them the necessary skills in order to be able for the child to be successful in school.

What happens throughout the school year is that we are not getting those referrals early enough so what's happening is that they're not able to use the skills right away as they're learning them.

The other problem is that we are always in constant contact with the school in order to

ensure that -- to address any changes or to monitor or evidence any changes positive or negative from the clients.

It is really important for us to be able to know this information as it's happening so we can address it in treatment as it happens. The delay in getting those referrals in makes it very difficult for us to be able for them to implement what they've learned.

I've been at the FSC -- and this is (inaudible) testimony. I apologize -- since 2008, and this will be my third summer, and I always (inaudible) referrals go up significantly starting around this time, the middle of March. In April, it will zoom, in May it will zoom, and we'll have all these referrals for truancy, and we're not going to be able to do a heck of a lot with them until the fall, and that's our biggest concern. That's why this is so important for us.

The second reason to institute the timeline is because it will help retain hope for students for the future. It has been our experience that hope is essential for clients in order to initiate them and -- initiate the same positive changes in behavior in school. Unfortunately, if we get a referral after a student has been absent for 30 days or more, it is unlikely that they will be able to pass for the rest of the year.

Despite what clients think, which is usually that they will have a clean start for the next school year, this delay in learning and lack of connection to the students does not usually diminish come fall. If anything, longer periods of time away from school make it more difficult for the students to learn.

Finally, the third reason why it's important to provide a time line is that if we're able to receive the referrals earlier in the school year, we're able to work with the guardian and the clients with school meetings, PPT's, prepping them for such, in order -- educational rights in order for them to have a school contact set and for their parent to -- we start monitoring those contacts with the school so by the time we're discharging the case, the parent has a person to contact, and they're able to implement what they know and what they've learned on their own.

For the reasons mentioned, I believe this bill is -- will help decrease the amount of repeat offenders. A student will be able to apply the new skills immediately and, therefore, see results and increase positive communications between home and school. I'm also confident that the school system will benefit from this bill as they will receive support from community providers such as the FSC and earlier in the process.

I would like to thank the Education Committee for providing me with the opportunity to support this bill.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. Questions?
Thank you.

MARIA LAMB: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Winston Kitson? Winston Kitson?
Vinnie Loffredo to be followed by Kim Yannon.

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: Good evening, Senator Stillman, and Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee.

I'm here this evening to comment on Sections

HB6499

5, 11 and 19 of Raised Bill 6499, An Act
Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education
Statutes.

I'm the Government Relations Director for the
Connecticut Education Association.

Section 5 modifies subsection (c) of 10-153f
of the Teacher Negotiations Act by requiring
that the legislative body or bodies of a
school district receive a copy of the
arbitrator or arbitrator's decision. CEA
opposes amending the Teacher Negotiation Act
including this proposed change.

This proposed legislative change is
unnecessary. It flies in the face of home
rule and local control. A local legislative
body has the authority to remedy this problem.
Current law provides for the arbitrator's
decision to be sent to each town clerk in the
school district involved. If there is a
problem where a legislative body is not
receiving this information, it has the
authority to adopt a resolution or ordinance
directing the town clerk to immediately
transmit a copy of the arbitrator's decision
to it.

Section 11 modifies the subsection (c) of
Section 10-151 of the Fair Dismissal Law by
changing the date when the teacher who has not
attained tenure receives a notice of
non-renewal. CEA supports maintaining the
current notice date of April 1st. This date
has been in effect for more than 25 years
without any problem.

Lastly, Section 19, lines 647 to 653, needs to
be re-examined to ensure that the access
information in the state-wide mastery
examination that this allows complies with and

does not violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, referred to as FERPA.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Raised Bill 6499.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Questions anyone?
Representative Fleischmann?

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Vinnie, for your testimony.

First, with regard to Section 5, your testimony confuses me because it seems to me that this just ensures that the legislative body of the school district is getting the same information that the school board is getting, and it was brought to us by people who were on boards of aldermen or town councils who felt like they weren't getting this information.

So, I'm just wondering how you could construe this as interfering with local control.

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: No. I'm -- my statement was that it's unnecessary because the local body who's saying they're not getting this information who oversees the town clerk's office, can pass a local resolution or ordinance ordering the proper transmittal of that information.

It's the first time I'm aware of the fact that they're not getting this information. They're filing it with the town clerk. The town clerk works for the town or city engaged, so why they would come here, seeking a remedy from the state legislature when they could readily remedy this problem themselves is a mystery to me and to the rest of us in light of the fact that they control that. That's my statement.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Yeah. Okay. There's lots of things that go to the town clerk that don't end up necessarily moving anyplace unless we say it has to move, but --

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: But they can make it move themselves is what we're saying.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: The second part of your testimony, I was catching up. Could you tell me which line of the bill you're referring to?

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: The second part of --

REP. FLEISCHMANN: You had three pieces. You had (inaudible) --

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: Yeah. The second part --

REP. FLEISCHMANN: The other was (inaudible) -- the lead regarding Section 11 --

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: Right.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: -- and it was about --

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: Changing the date, yeah, from -- changing the dates. Currently, it's April 1st. I think they want to move it to May 1st.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Right, and I think this was brought to us by the state department which thought that the later date would be more convenient for all involved, so I'm just wondering why -- why you don't share that view.

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: Well, it hasn't been a problem. To our knowledge, it's been in effect for well over 25 years. It's been in effect. We're not aware of any problem at

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all, that teachers receiving this information with time constraints. In fact, many, many years ago, those of us who were around -- maybe 40 years ago, 30 years ago -- it used to be March 1st, and now it was moved some time ago to April 1st.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Right. Well, okay. I mean, I'll be glad to check in with the department, but they had a sense that it would be easier if we could make that last change.

And then finally you raised questions about FERPA, a section I thought was pretty innocuous. I mean, don't superintendents and -- or their designees who are part of a school system, aren't they automatically folks who are covered by FERPA and who adhere to its tenets pursuant to their job?

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: The way this is written, it goes beyond local superintendencies' responsibilities. The way that is written, it appears to us that a superintendent in Town A can access information in Town X, Y or Z, and that may be a problem.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Okay. I'm not sure that that was the intention, but we'll discuss that. Thank you.

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Questions anyone? Thank you very much.

Kim Yannon to be followed by Alex Johnston.

KIM YANNON: Good evening, Senator Stillman, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Kim Yannon. I'm a music educator in the town of Cheshire. I'm also president of

HB 6498

Is there anyone else who is present who may not have signed up but wishes to testify? Please come forward and state your name for the record.

KRYSTYNA ZAMOVSKA: Good evening. I'm Dr. Krystyna Zamovska, and I read about the genocide requirement suggestion for the genocide requirement in The Courant yesterday, so this is hot off the press. I decided to participate to bring a higher education perspective to comment on whom I get in terms of high school students, what they know and don't know.

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I'm basically opposed to genocide on its own because of what I see in college classrooms. There are students that I get who basically are quite ignorant of the history of the war in Europe, so to isolate genocide as a separate topic is counter-productive.

In terms of what students raising questions in terms of pedagogy, I started off in high schools in New York and in labor education, and I taught a lot about what constitutes cultural and civic literacy, and our students would -- in order to bring in the ethnic cleansing and genocide, I think it should be contextualized.

I just started a unit that involves -- encourages critical thinking skills and encourages students to think about civic engagement, and I asked them to write, before we started reading a book, a couple of books on the memory of the war, this is one of my research areas of how the war in Europe is remembered and constituted in America, so I asked students to tell me what they know first before we start the unit, and basically for

them, Pearl Harbor and (inaudible) -- these are good kids. I mean, they come from -- I teach kids who come from the suburbs, Hartford -- West Hartford, Farmington, Simsbury, et cetera, and their knowledge of World War II is nil, and in order to defend events of the genocide during the war, which was extremely expensive, and millions and millions of people died.

Also, Darfur. They need to understand colonial history and a lot of conflicts, so basically in order to extract genocide or ethnic cleansing as a unit really does a disservice to wholistic knowledge because it should be done in terms of history.

So, definitely all that should be taught, but it should be taught in terms of war because that conflict cannot be understood without understanding the underlying historical causes, and our students are in a globalized world, globalizing world, tend to have a very parochial provincial (inaudible), which is very sad. I try to shake them up.

Our students also have very little information in terms of Hartford. I do a unit on (inaudible) which addresses a lot of the things that you talked about all day, and they don't know the Hartford history. They don't know that, you know, we have four of the top central core cities in the country.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. If you could just summarize, please (inaudible).

KRYSTYNA ZAMOVSKA: That's basically it. I'm against genocide that's a separate item because it should be wholistic. It should include -- we should emphasize history, education of history --

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you.

KRYSTYNA ZAMOVSKA: -- especially the history of Europe in order to teach the Second World War and --

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you.

KRYSTYNA ZAMOVSKA: (Inaudible.)

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Are there questions?
Representative Johnson?

REP. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And just quickly, I just -- have you had a chance to look at the textbooks that we have for our kids at the high school, and maybe even the junior high to see if there's anything, any way they should be improved?

KRYSTYNA ZAMOVSKA: No, I haven't. I teach college, but I could.

REP. JOHNSON: I think that that perhaps is part of our difficulty. Thank you so much for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, Representative Johnson. Other questions? Hearing none, thank you very much --

KRYSTYNA ZAMOVSKA: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: -- for your patience. Is there anyone else present in the room who wishes to testify? Seeing no one raising their hand, I hereby declare this public hearing adjourned.

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March 7, 2011

TESTIMONY OF
GEORGE A. COLEMAN, ACTING COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

ON

RAISED BILLS 1102, 1103, 1105, 6498, 6499, 6500, 6501, 6502

RAISED BILL 1102: AN ACT CONCERNING AUTHORIZATION OF STATE GRANT COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AND CONCERNING CHANGES TO THE STATUTES CONCERNING SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS

The State Department of Education (CSDE) supports Raised Bill #1102, *AAC Authorization of State Grant Commitments for School Building Projects and Concerning Changes to the Statutes Concerning School Building Projects*, to authorize state grant commitments for school building projects and to establish the School Building Projects Advisory Council.

Section 1 of this bill contains the school construction priority list that CSDE submits annually to the General Assembly for approval.

Section 2 of this bill establishes a School Building Projects Advisory Council. Input from and discussion among agencies and industries involved with construction and state financing is extremely valuable for the school construction grant. The CSDE Bureau of School Facilities has been engaged with design professionals and construction managers and town and school business finance representatives for years on a more informal basis.

However, with that said, this advisory council conflicts with the Governor's bill outlining changes to school construction. That expertise would be provided by the new Department of Construction Services.

As such, CSDE supports Raised Bill # 1102.

RAISED BILL 1103: AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The State Department of Education (CSDE) strongly supports Raised Bill #1103, *AAC Early Childhood Education*, as it represents a number of the State Board of Education's Legislative proposals for this Legislative session.

Section 2 of this bill allows for the distribution of unallocated competitive school readiness funds to *any* eligible grantee that may serve additional children. Current law allows for the distribution of unallocated competitive school readiness funds to towns with two or more priority schools if they can provide additional spaces for children. The fifty poorest towns are also eligible to receive a competitive school readiness grant; however, they are currently ineligible to receive additional unallocated funds, even if they have the ability to serve more children. This change will allow more children to be served.

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existing known information and networks within the educational community and then incorporated into one set of guidelines for lead poisoning prevention and intervention.

As such, the CSDE supports Raised Bill #1105, with some concerns.

RAISED BILL 6498: AAC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The State Department of Education (CSDE) supports Raised Bill #6498, *AAC School Districts*, to delay the implementation of certain mandates in Public Act 10-111; and to create a task force to examine issues related to the changes in the high school graduation requirements, with some concerns.

Section 4 delays lifting the 85 per grade enrollment cap for high achieving charter schools adopted in the 2010 legislative session. Delaying this provision may have the unintended consequence of imposing further limitations on charter schools which want to significantly expand enrollments based on demand.

Section 6 delays bond authorizations for charter schools. In 2010, the Bond Commission provided \$2,529,154 in bond funds to charter schools. This total represents apportionment of the total \$5 million allocated. The Bond Commission has not acted to date on the remaining amount of \$2,470,846. Because more than half of the charter schools have historically submitted applications for this funding, and because requests for these grants have, to date, exceeded funds available by as much as 160 percent, we expect that there will be continued need for capital expense associated for the charters. Improving existing facilities and ensuring the health and safety for students is a priority and therefore CSDE does not support the delay in this provision.

CSDE supports the sections addressing the various aspects of Secondary School Reform by pushing out the date of implementation. CSDE believes it is crucial to move forward on Secondary School Reform in order for our students to be better equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in further education and the workforce. However, CSDE also recognizes the fiscal burden this poses on the state and school districts and therefore supports the date changes.

For the sections pertaining to School Governance Council (SGC) reporting requirements, CSDE has additional suggestions to further streamline the SGC reporting requirements, while retaining the initial intent of the reporting requirements. CSDE will subsequently submit these suggested changes to the Chairs of the Education Committee.

RAISED BILL 6499: AAC MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES

The State Department of Education (CSDE) is in agreement with the concepts in Raised Bill #6499, *AAC Minor Revisions to the Education Statute*, with some concerns.

The CSDE has concerns with Section 4 of this bill as written.

The purpose of this section is noted to require the State Board of Education to adopt regulations that create a certification endorsement area in computer and information technology that allows computer and information technology teachers to teach in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive. However, the bill language itself doesn't indicate anything about certification regulations and a certification endorsement to

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teach computers and IT in grades K-12.

CSDE supports the purpose listed at the conclusion of the bill, however does not support the language as written.

Sections 6 through 14 seek to amend a number of CSDE reporting requirements required. These sections represent a number of the State Board of Education Legislative proposals for this Legislative session. **CSDE strongly supports these sections of the bill.**

Section 19 allows superintendents limited access to information in the state-wide public school information system. Every school district already has a designated person who has access to the Public School Information System (PSIS). In addition, each school district has a designated person for access to the secure student-level assessment data available through the www.ctreports.com website. With this level of access, a school district can retrieve all the information outlined in this section. With that said, since school districts already have access to this information, this section seems unnecessary.

Section 21 of this bill requires CSDE to define "excused" and "unexcused" absences for the purpose of determining whether a child is truant or not. Currently, there is no uniform definition of these terms and districts across the state have different policies as to what types of absences are excused and what are not. As such, when CSDE receives data as to the rate of truancy in a school district, such data is not comparable from district to district. **CSDE supports this section of the bill.**

RAISED BILL 6500: AAC EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

The State Department of Education (CSDE) **supports in part and opposes in part** Raised Bill #6500, AAC Educational Achievement, to require local and regional boards of education to annually establish student goals and objectives for the school year; to require all applicants for certification in the endorsement area of elementary education to pass a mathematics examination approved by the State Board of Education; and to require the Department of Education to develop a uniform system of accounting for school expenditures that includes a chart of accounts for each individual school in a school district.

CSDE **supports Section 2** of this bill to require all applicants for certification in the endorsement area of elementary education to pass a mathematics examination approved by the State Board of Education, as CSDE is already in the process of considering one Educational Testing Services (ETS) exam that would provide candidates with a separate math score.

CSDE is **opposed to Section 3** of this bill. CSDE already has in place a uniform system that collects detailed expenditures at the school district level that complies with the Federal guidelines on financial accounting for local and state school systems

CSDE has the following concerns about section 3 of this bill:

- CSDE believes that this would generate a **significant fiscal impact on every school district** in a time when budgets are declining or flat funded;
- This may require local boards of education that are under their municipal reporting systems to develop their own additional reporting system, which could be very costly; and,
- The implementation timeline outlined in this section of the bill is not feasible for the state or the school districts.

Dr. Joseph A. Olzacki
District Director of Visual & Performing Arts
The Bloomfield Public Schools
Bloomfield, Connecticut

In support of HB 6499

I am here to testify in support the HB6499 as a minor revision. I believe that this is a first step that hopefully leads to the mandate that Connecticut schools teach Holocaust and Genocide education as it is witnessed in the states of Illinois, California, New York, New Jersey, and Florida.

Presently, I serve as the district director of visual and performing arts for the Bloomfield Connecticut Public Schools. As the director of this district wide department, I not only administer arts programs but have also initiated and included issues of human rights and Genocide throughout the arts curriculum in the Bloomfield Schools. I have spoken on the issue of Genocide education statewide and recently lectured on the subject for UNESCO in Kigali, Rwanda at the International Human Rights Conference. We need your help and leadership in addressing the passive nature of our history curriculum in high schools in regards to Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights education – a very basic ideology.

Since the dawn of time, every culture has experienced the degradation of their humanity, whether it is by slavery, servitude or ethnic cleansing. As an educator and a passionate advocate for human rights, it is a shame that the state of Connecticut needs a law mandating inclusion of a Holocaust/ Genocide education component in the history or social studies curriculum in Connecticut high schools in order to instruct on this material.

Each year, countless Holocaust survivors pass away. With their passing goes an incalculable amount of wisdom and knowledge of the Holocaust of the last century. The heroes of World War II are dying out as well, yet we will not forget their sacrifices because it is part of our American History curriculum. British statesman, Edmund Burke, (1729-1797) shakes a noble finger at us through his statement, "Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it." The Holocaust of World War II witnessed over 11 million lives lost, in Rwanda, in 99 days, 800,000 Tutsis were slaughtered because they were not of the right ethnic group and in Dar fur millions of lives lost have not yet been completely accounted. If we do not educate our young people to understand the signs and symptoms that are precursors to Genocide, then the world may yet again be allowed to repeat it.

After World War II, the term "Never Again" rang across the world. If we do not educate our young people in the sacrifices and lessons of the Holocaust, they will never know what occurred. The atrocities are so outrageous; it is unbelievable to fathom how man can be so inhumane to his own species. Without evidence and the knowledge of past and present day occurrences – to the uneducated, Genocide seems but a fabrication. A law mandating Holocaust/Genocide education will assure that the young people of Connecticut will truly never forget.

I humbly ask that you bring to the legislature this minor revision as a first step and as an example to school districts in the rest of our country.

I would like to end my testimony with a message from the past.

First they came... is a famous statement attributed to Pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984) about the inactivity of German intellectuals following the Nazi rise to power and the purging of their chosen targets, group after group. The text of the quotation is usually presented roughly as follows:

First they came... - Pastor Martin Niemöller

First they came for the communists,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for me
and there was no one left to speak out for me.

This is not the model I want for my students. This is not the model I want for future generations of children in this state, in this nation or in the world. You on this committee can speak out for my children.

Thank you.

Holocaust/Genocide Education Laws

Country or State	Year of First Enactment	Citation	Key Wording
Florida	1994	<u>F.S. 1003.42(2)(g)</u>	The history of the Holocaust (1933-1945), the systematic, planned annihilation of European Jews and other groups by Nazi Germany, a watershed event in the history of humanity, to be taught in a manner that leads to an investigation of human behavior, an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping, and an examination of what it means to be a responsible and respectful person, for the purposes of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions.
New Jersey	1991	<u>N.J.S. 18A:4A</u>	Every board of education shall include instruction on the Holocaust and genocides in an appropriate place in the curriculum of all elementary and secondary school pupils. The instruction shall enable pupils to identify and analyze applicable theories concerning human nature and behavior: to understand that genocide is a consequence of prejudice and discrimination: and to understand that issues of moral dilemma and conscience have a profound impact on life. The instruction shall further emphasize the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.
Illinois	1989	<u>105 ILCS 5/27-20.3</u>	Holocaust and Genocide Study. Every public elementary school and high school shall include in its curriculum a unit of instruction studying the events of the Nazi atrocities of 1933 to 1945. This period in world history is known as the Holocaust, during which 6,000,000 Jews and millions of non-Jews were exterminated. One of the universal lessons of the Holocaust is that national, ethnic, racial, or religious hatred can overtake any nation or society, leading to calamitous consequences.
California	1985	<u>California Code Section 51220</u>	Instruction shall provide a foundation for understanding ... human rights issues, with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery, and the Holocaust, and contemporary issues.

New York	1994	<u>Education Title</u> <u>1 Art. 17, Sec.</u> <u>801</u>	the regents of the University of the State of New York shall prescribe courses of instruction in patriotism (and) citizenship and human rights issues, with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery, and the Holocaust, to be maintained and followed in all the schools of the state.
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4-19

Never Again?

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Izzy Kornman and I am a tenth grader at Hall High School in West Hartford. I am here to talk about why I support bill 6499. I am also the granddaughter of two Holocaust survivors. In almost two years in public school, I have spent approximately five days on Holocaust education during Freshman year. If Hall can teach every incoming Freshman, approximately 400 teens each year, there is no reason that anyone else should not be able to. Between 1938 and 1945, more than six million Jews were massacred. In addition to those innocent souls, five million others were targeted and slaughtered because they were not up to Nazi standards. To most people, those are just numbers. For those seven years, Jews were just numbers, stripped of their names and their humanity. Now, those victims of a horrific race cleansing are becoming numbers once more, passed over in school systems nationwide. My grandmother, Irene Frisch, and my grandfather, Eugene Frisch, are not just numbers. They are people. They are survivors. Three generations on from the Holocaust, approximately one in three Americans does not even know what the Holocaust was or when it took place. Thirty-three percent of US citizens are shockingly unaware of one of the most gruesome massacres in recorded history. Now, with the number of survivors dwindling, it is more important than ever to pass a law mandating the study of the Holocaust.

In addition to the fact that people should know about the Holocaust for what happened there, people also need to learn about it to realize how easily it happened. Heather Bentley, an expert on Holocaust study, asserted that horrible things have happened, are happening, and will continue to happen if peace and tolerance are not taught. It is imperative to see the Holocaust not only as a historical event, but use it as a tool for teaching about the ideas of intolerance and what is necessary for society to survive. Without a state mandate, students will be going out into the world without this invaluable information. If all students like me are taught the lessons of the Holocaust, we will not be silent in the face of other mass killings wherever they take place.

This mandate is not just about the teaching of the Holocaust. It is much more than that. It is a doorway to talk about the ethics of genocide. The Holocaust is not one of the most enjoyable subjects, but it is essential to know about. Otherwise, it will surely happen all over again – the racism, genocide, horror. Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it. Teenagers like me are the future of our state and our country. If we are not taught about the atrocities of our past, we will not be able to recognize them in the future.

Never again? The world promised that we would never allow a mass genocide like the Holocaust to happen again. Look at Darfur. Look at Uganda. Genocides are happening right now. Who is going to stop them? Without knowledge of the Holocaust, tomorrow's world leaders will not be able to comprehend the severity of the situation. Thank you for your time.

5-14

March 6, 2011

Madam Chair, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Dr. Linda Pelletier. I live in Union, teach at the University of Connecticut and freelance as a sign language interpreter. ASL is my native and first language as both my parents are Deaf.

I support the section of Raised Bill 6499, "An Act Concerning minor revisions to the education statutes" which would classify American Sign Language as a foreign (world) language as part of the program of instruction in our public schools.

Over the past 30 years, several factors have contributed to the growth and interest in learning American Sign Language. The most significant contribution has been the empirical research and linguistic study of ASL as a legitimate language. An additional interesting and unintended contributor to this growth originated with the introduction of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142). Both are intended to integrate Deaf and hard of hearing students in regular classrooms with hearing students. However, this inclusion has also integrated ASL and Deaf culture into general education classrooms. After 30 years of institutionalizing the practice of mainstreaming, classes and programs in American Sign Language and Deaf culture in American public schools have grown.

Today, an increasing number of hearing students in public schools and institutions of higher education have taken up interest in learning ASL and Deaf culture. The University of Connecticut fully recognizes ASL as a foreign language and offers ASL as a foreign language graduation requirement option. The department of linguistics offers five levels of American Sign Language courses are offered including four Deaf related courses: Deaf culture, Multicultural Issues in Deafness, Deaf Women's Studies and Deaf Literature. Due to the high enrollment and growth in our ASL and Deaf culture courses, we have expanded our program to include courses in sign language interpreting training and education. The study of ASL and Deaf culture affords students the same challenges and rewards similar to traditional

foreign languages. Students learn about a language and culture that is different from their own and the opportunities, both personally and professionally, are comparable to those of traditional foreign languages.

It is sometimes argued, although to a much lesser extent, that ASL is not foreign because it is used here in the United States. The idea of "foreignness" has been re-conceptualized over the past few decades. In an increasingly global society, languages are becoming increasingly less foreign. English is, unquestionably a global language that is losing its foreignness. To question ASL's foreignness is to suggest world languages and native speakers of a language can only be studied and appreciated outside the United States? If this is true, then how can we explain or justify the study of Native American languages? And, does this suggest that Spanish students can only appreciate and learn Spanish in Spain or Mexico without consideration of the millions of Spanish speakers here in the United States?

One final and very important note I would like to make is that on February 15th, 2011, less than one month ago, both the Senate and the House in the State of Virginia voted overwhelmingly in favor of HB1435; the recognition of American Sign Language as a foreign language. Now that the bill has passed both houses (95-3 in the House and 34-6 in the Senate) it will be enrolled to go to Governor McDonnell for his signature. As stated in the Richmond Times, the Governor's office previously took "no position" on the bill so there is no reason to expect that he will not sign the bill. This will make Virginia the 35th State to honor this recognition. When signed into law by Governor McDonnell, the bill will make sign language courses more accessible by opening doors for all students, both Deaf and hearing. It is our hope Connecticut will follow the same trend as with the majority of States and become the 36th State to recognize American Sign Language as a world language.

Thank you.

Linda Pelletier, PhD, CI/CT, NAD5
Professor and ASL/English Interpreter

13-15

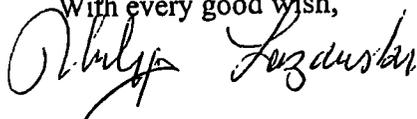
Dr. Philip Lazowski, Rabbi
15 Lewis Street, 5th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103

March 4, 2011

Chairmen Fleischmann and Stillman and members of the Education Committee,

I am Rabbi Philip Lazowski, one of the Senate Chaplains and a Holocaust Survivor. I am here to support House bill 6499, "An Act concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statues". I understand language in this bill will now include that our state supports the option for our schools to teach Genocide education in addition to already the option to teach Holocaust education. Frankly, I would hope this committee, if not this year, will definitely look at the 5 states which mandate the teaching of Holocaust and Genocide education: Florida, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois. I do speak to many schools and firmly believe I leave students with not only the knowledge of what happened during this terrible time in our history, but also a message of hope, determination and how to live a good and meaningful life. If the state would make Holocaust education part of the curriculum in U.S. History, then I do believe a number of foundations will help to fund teacher training. The models of good curriculum already exist from the ADL and Facing History and Ourselves, some of these curriculums may even be downloaded at no cost to the teachers. In summary, I have seen low income and in some cases troubled students in Bloomfield schools: African Americans and Caribbean Americans benefit greatly from the teaching by Dr. Joe Olzacki in regards to the lessons of what happens to people when their identities are destroyed. I even have had mothers call me to tell me when I come to the school and speak and talk to students, her child has changed to a better student and better person. Thank you and I would be happy to answer questions.

With every good wish,



Dr. Philip Lazowski, Rabbi

PL/tke



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 STATE CAPITOL
 HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID BARAM
 FIFTEENTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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MEMBER
 JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
 SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
 BANKS COMMITTEE

Dear Chairpersons Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischman and Members of the Education Committee,

I am here today to support HB 6499 which encourages school districts to include Holocaust and Genocide studies in their curriculum. While I believe that this should be mandatory, I understand that its inclusion in CGS Section 10-16b identifies it as a priority topic that can be instructive and helpful to Connecticut students. I hope however that this is a first step toward making it a permanent study requisite.

The States of Florida, New Jersey, Illinois, California, and New York already mandate Holocaust and Genocide studies as part of their curriculum. Reasons given for this required instruction include the following:

The Holocaust was a watershed event that impacted the course of human history, involving unimaginable atrocities that resulted in the murder of six million Jews and over five million others based on prejudice and racism;

Holocaust studies help students understand the roots and effects of prejudice and racism;

The Holocaust provides lessons of man's inhumanity to man, and the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic, and indifferent when people are oppressed or subjected to genocide;

Indifference to genocide and suffering violates our moral obligations and undermines our institutions of democracy and freedom;

The Holocaust and incidents of genocide illustrate how governments and political leaders can manipulate hatred and prejudice and use such emotions to justify discrimination, thereby inciting society to foster acts of hatred, murder, and discrimination;

Holocaust studies teach us why modern nations must work to promote tolerance, pluralism, and diversity as inherent principles of a free and democratic society;

Students can apply the lessons of the Holocaust to modern day incidents of genocide, such as Darfur, to reinforce their duty to speak up and become advocates in stopping all such acts of genocide;

Studying the Holocaust and genocide can teach students the importance of identity and self esteem, so that they are comfortable in speaking against all forms of racism and discrimination, so that they can identify genocide and work to prevent it, so that they can strengthen their own sense of responsibility and moral obligation;

Several school systems in Connecticut have already implemented Holocaust and Genocide Studies. My home town of Bloomfield is a prime example. Through the efforts of our

Performing Arts & Music Director, Dr. Joe Olzacki, a program for his music and arts students called the Identity Program was instituted several years ago. This program includes assigned reading, lectures by outside authorities and Holocaust survivors, a visit to the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC, and written assignments. At the Holocaust Museum, not only do students witness past genocide targeted against Jews, but they are lectured about ongoing genocide in Darfur and other places throughout the world. These studies inspired a young African-American student from Bloomfield, Raymond Clark, to create a musical composition about the Holocaust, which has been played by many musicians including the Yale Orchestra. The Bloomfield experience is a remarkable accomplishment that has been written about in the Hartford Courant and Hartford Magazine.

Mandating Holocaust and Genocide Studies should be our goal. The cost is minimal if anything, as curricula already exists in the five states mentioned above, in several Connecticut school systems, in organizations like the ADL that fight intolerance and racism, and even at the Dodd Center at UConn which houses the Nuremberg Papers of Thomas Dodd donated by Senator Chris Dodd and his family.

The importance of Holocaust and Genocide Studies has been discussed extensively by Holocaust survivor, author, lecturer, and Nobel Peace Prize Recipient Elie Wiesel. One of his well known quotes says:

"I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

I respectfully ask that you support the addition of Holocaust and Genocide Studies to public school curricula and hope that you can ultimately find a way to make this subject matter mandatory in CT Public Schools.

Respectfully,

Representative David Baram

Public Testimony Before the Joint Education Committee
Re: Raised HB 6499: An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes, Chapter 164, Section 10-16b to include American Sign Language as a World Language
March 7, 2011

Sen. Andrea Stillman and Rep. Andrew Fleischmann, Co-Chairs:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you and the Committee members about the raised HB 6499: An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes. I am Dr. Harvey J. Corson, Retired Educator, Vice- President of the Connecticut Association of the Deaf (CAD) and a Core Member of the Statewide Committee on American Sign Language as a World Language.

Today I am speaking in reference to the need to update the statute--Chapter 164, Section 10-16b. In 1989 this education statute was enacted to provide a mechanism for an elective course, sign language, to be offered to secondary students for credit under Language Arts. Some twenty years later we find that Connecticut is the only state that considers sign language as part of Language Arts. According to research, this view is outdated.

As part of the effort to study the need for updating the current statute, a Statewide Committee on American Sign Language as a World Language was established about five years ago to do research on this matter. Two years ago in September 2009, the Statewide Committee developed a Power Point Presentation. This document was shared with the Connecticut Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. This resulted in nine various organizations serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens in the state endorsing this need for the updating of the 1989 law. Last year this document was also shared with the Joint Education Committee providing the background information and data indicating the need for the proposed revision.

This proposed revision would enable Connecticut to be in line with the majority of the states, especially in the Northeast, in terms of offering the American Sign Language (ASL) as part of world language electives available to secondary school students.

This proposed revision reflects current research and acknowledgement that the American Sign Language is a language in its own right, not a form of English or part of Language Arts. As of March 2010, 166 colleges and universities accept American Sign Language as a foreign or world language. Accordingly, the phrase "or Signed English" in line 17 on page 2 in the proposed bill should be deleted as part of the updating process.

This revision would provide current and future secondary students the opportunity to select American Sign Language, if offered, as one of world language electives to learn about the language and culture of deaf and hard of hearing people. This may also provide career exploration and preparation for future college students interested in working with deaf and hard of hearing children and adults in various careers such as teachers, interpreters, counselors, health care professionals, social workers,

Public Testimony Before the Joint Education Committee

Re: Raised HB 6499: An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes,
Chapter 164, Section 10-16b to include American Sign Language as a World Language
March 7, 2011

researchers, etc. Thus, the pool of needed professionals working with this population would be maintained or increased.

Recently, the USA Today and the New York Times newspapers, in their December 8, 2010 editions, reported that American Sign Language is the fourth most studied foreign language on college campuses according to the 2009 triennial survey conducted by the Modern Language Association. Furthermore, the same survey mentioned the American Sign Language "increased more than 16%" from 2006, reflecting "the growing acceptance of American Sign Language to meet college foreign language requirements and its usefulness as an employment credential".

This would be one of the possible positive outcomes of the proposed legislation.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this proposed revision.

Madam Chair, Mr. Chairman and members of the Education Committee, my name is Mary Silvestri and I live in Danbury. I am a Deaf mother of three grown Deaf children who graduated from the Danbury public school system. I have been a certified Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Danbury area for 34 years and have taught American Sign Language (ASL) at Danbury High School for 15 years.

I support the section of Raised Bill 6499, "An Act Concerning minor revisions to the education statutes" which would classify American Sign Language as a foreign (world) language as part of the program of instruction in our public schools.

Upon reading the bill, I would suggest two minor changes – "American sign language" should be capitalized (American Sign Language) and "signed English" should be taken out.

Before explaining my reasoning for classifying ASL as a world language, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my Legislators, Senator Michael McLachlan and Representative Joseph Taborsak, and their aides, Adam Chiara and Kelley Fournier, for all their help in bringing this matter to your attention. They listened patiently to our concerns and guided us through the Legislative Maze.

The reason for my supporting the minor change in Raised Bill 6499 (which involves no added burden to the state budget) is that the statute needs to be updated to recognize ASL as a world language and not as part of language arts. Most importantly, ASL is considered a language in its own right by linguists.

Teaching ASL in the public schools benefits everyone. Some of my ASL students have gone on to become interpreters, special education teachers, and regular education teachers. I also often bump into former students in my community who then sign to me. Every year in my ASL class, I have students telling me with great excitement that while working, they were able to communicate with a deaf customer. So ASL is a language that can be used immediately in the community.

Although I am already certified as a teacher, I have taken additional training to become a qualified ASL teacher. This involved completing a 15-hour program on ASL teaching sponsored by SLIP (a state ASL teachers group) joining ASLTA (a national ASL teachers group) and earning a second level of ASLTA certification, traveling to Virginia for a four-day workshop on using an ASL textbook, attending a workshop in Connecticut on Foreign Language National Standards as applied to ASL, and most recently taking core ASL teaching classes at Columbia University and receiving an ASL curriculum for high school students.

All my training and experience as an ASL teacher, a teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing and Deaf individual lead me to believe the statute should be updated to classify ASL as a world language.

Thank you for allowing me to present my testimony at this Hearing.

Mary Silvestri
Danbury, CT

March 7, 2011

21-11

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 6499: AN ACT CONCERNING
MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES

March 7, 2011

This testimony is submitted in favor of Bill 6499, which will reduce truancy rates by enabling truant students to obtain access to services more quickly by mandating schools to file FWSN's within 30 days of the failure of parental participation and community interventions to alleviate the absences of an identified truant student. Truant students will be able to access CSSD and other agency services much sooner than the current delayed system of filing. These services include: referral to Family Support Centers, educational advocacy, mental health services, afterschool programs, parenting classes, and other supports.

My name is Joseph Vaverchak, District Supervisor of Attendance/Residency and the McKinney Vento Homeless Liaison for the Consolidated School District of New Britain, Connecticut. I am writing this testimony in support of Bill 6499/An Act Concerning Minor Revision to the Education Statues.. I have worked with truant students since 1996. I have been involved in attendance/truancy committees since 1998 starting with the State of Connecticut Task Force on Truancy. Following this, I co-chaired the Governor's Prevention Program on Truancy. Our district is a member of the Consortium on School Attendance coordinated by the Office of Policy and Management. I was also part of the Families with Service Needs Advisory Board, co-chaired by Martha Stone and Preston Britner, a board that worked diligently to propose new legislation in the area of truancy which initiated the original Bill that preceded this recommendation.

I believe that diverting truant children from juvenile court is very important and diversions should be put in place. In order to enforce these diversions, school districts should be held accountable for developing and implementing policies and procedures that involve parents and the community in a process to improve attendance and divert

children from the courts. If parents are not engaged in the process I strongly believe there should be a timeline in which schools should be filing a FWSN referral. The mandate to file a FWSN in a timely manner will enable truant students access to CSSD and other agency services much sooner then the current delayed system of filing resulting in greater likelihood of school success, including lowering the drop out rate. By not mandating FWSN's be filed in a timely manner we are perpetuating the likelihood that truants will not return to school.

We know that early intervention is the key to success. Yet my experience has been that despite significant efforts on the part of districts to engage parents in the process of addressing truancy, for varying reasons, we often find ourselves without their support. Requiring FWSN's to be filed within 30 days of attempts to involve parents is vital to finding and using other avenues for intervention.

In conclusion, I am in strong support of Bill 6499 which would create a clear timeline for the filing of FWSN's and hold schools accountable for that timeline.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Vaverchak
District Supervisor of Attendance/Residency
McKinney Vento Homeless Liaison
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State of Connecticut

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March 7, 2011

MINORITY WHIP
RANKING MEMBER
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS
COMMITTEE
MEMBER
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan, and I am here to speak in support of House Bill 6499, *An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes*.

I am particularly interested in language in Section 1 that would classify American Sign Language as a foreign language for the purposes of the prescribed education curriculum.

This concept was originally a part of Senate Bill 491, which I proposed in order to enhance the language requirements in our state's education curriculum. With this language we will be able to mainstream American Sign Language in schools in a way where those who rely on it to communicate will feel they are being accepted and so others who are interested in learning the language have the ability to do so.

Expanding the education curriculum to include different cultures, languages and concepts is a way to develop our education system with the modern needs of society as well as improve our system for future generations. Our goal should be diversifying the bank of knowledge that our children receive while in school, so that they can grow and meet the needs of our society in a greater capacity. Their knowledge base should go beyond what they are most familiar and comfortable with.

Additionally, accepting American Sign Language as a foreign language in our education curriculum promotes an acceptance for those who rely upon American Sign Language to communicate. It mainstreams the language, and lessens any alienation that is felt by those who utilize it. Acceptance and appreciation for the differences in people are parts of the education that we owe our children.

I urge the committee too support House Bill 6499, in order to expand the range of knowledge that our children are receiving through their education.

Thank you,

Michael A. McLachlan
State Senator – 24th District

Testimony bill number 6499-AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES

Shari Cantor, Town Councilor West Hartford
39 Colony Rd
West Hartford, CT 06117

Here is my testimony in favor of bill 6499.

I am proud to live in a state that is accepting and tolerant of people from all ethnicities, cultures, and sexual orientations. Our community leaders are educated and worldly resulting in an environment that is enlightened and accepting. We need to guarantee that the generations that follow have the opportunity to learn from the painful lessons of history. One of the worst demonstrations of prejudice, intolerance, denigration, and incomprehensible atrocities is the Holocaust. This was a calculated murder of six million Jews solely because of their religion and an additional 5 million people because of other prejudices. The lessons from this despicable act of genocide are relevant today and will remain so in the future. The living witnesses of this horrific event are dying everyday, therefore making it all the more important to educate and inform our young people and future generations.

Ignorance is the leading cause of intolerance, hatred and violent acts. It is incumbent upon us, the generation that learned first hand about these seemingly unbelievable atrocities, to teach the valuable lessons from this most painful piece of history. Today, we still see prejudice against people of all cultures, ethnicities, and sexual orientation. Therefore, informing our students about the Holocaust and genocide is not just important, **it is essential**. The most critical people to teach are the people least likely to be exposed to the knowledge of these events. Therefore mandating the education of the Holocaust and genocide in our public schools is the best

way to ensure Connecticut's young people will remain knowledgeable and tolerant and not accept bigotry and violence. They will be the voices of acceptance and righteousness.

I am a Town Councilor and chair of the Finance and Budget committee in West Hartford. As a result, I am keenly aware of the impact of unfunded mandates on municipal budgets. They have become a real stress to our budgets and I would be extremely hesitant, as I hope all legislators are, to support an unfunded mandate in these extremely challenging financial times. This mandate is different. The resources available are plentiful nationally and within our own state. The experiences of the other states that have enacted similar legislation is that the cost is negligible. We have assurances from the JFACT (Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut) that resources will be made available so that no cost will be added to current school budgets to incorporate this piece into the curriculum.

Who wouldn't want to enrich our students lives with the lessons of tolerance, open-mindedness, and history for no additional cost? This surely is a "no brainer".



STEVEN J. ADAMOWSKI
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Testimony of: Jill Cutler Hodgman
Regarding an Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

OPENING CHOICE: Honorable Chairmen and Members of the Committee

TEXT OF TESTIMONY / STATEMENT OF POSITION:

My name is Jill Cutler Hodgman. I currently serve as the Chief Labor and Legal Services Officer for the Hartford Public Schools and have worked in labor relations for the Hartford Schools for more than eight years.

The Hartford Public Schools strongly supports adjusting the deadline, from April 1 to May 1, to notify a teacher that such teacher's contract will not be renewed for the following year. The current deadline of April 1 creates some significant obstacles for the school environment, for staff morale and for district operations. HB6499

First, the deadline requires the administrator evaluating the non-tenured teacher to complete a full year's evaluation procedure by February, which is only the sixth month of a ten month school year. This strikes both the evaluator and the teacher as incredibly early in the year to make a full year's assessment of the teacher's effectiveness. It requires the district's evaluation plan to mandate all the goal setting, observations, conferences, and year end summative for all non-tenured teachers be completed in February. Many principals struggle with meaningfully evaluating all such teachers so soon in the year.

Second, the teacher who has received notice that his/her contract will not be renewed for the following year is required to work for a minimum of four additional months after such notice for the very administrator and district who is not pleased with his/her performance. This can put an incredible strain on the relationship between the teacher and the administrator, which has a deleterious impact on the students and staff in the building; other than placing such individual on a paid leave, there is little a district can do when the relationship deteriorates. It has been my experience that the quality of the instruction by such a teacher often diminishes, such teacher uses leave time so students are without a certified teacher in the classroom, and the administrator is left without much recourse. Four months is a long time to continue employment after notice of the equivalent of a dismissal.

Third, in the case of budgetary cuts, the March 1 deadline is well before the budget is due to the City of Hartford and certainly before the district is aware of its funding/revenue for the following

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school year. As a consequence, the district is required to non-renew for budgetary reasons without knowing the specific number of position reductions. The timing difference requires the district either to not use the non-renewal process as intended or to overuse the process by non-renewing more non-tenured teachers than the district will need to, which is undermining to staff morale and school stability.

Finally, the state student testing (CMTs and CAPT) occurs in March each year when the written notice must be provided to teachers under the current law. As this testing period is sacrosanct in the school setting, it is incredibly disruptive to deliver these letters of non-renewal, and such delivery can serve as a distraction during an important and sensitive period of the school year.

For all of these reasons, it is helpful to have additional time to decide whether or not to continue the contract of a non-tenured teacher.

ENDING:

In closing, I would like to thank the Committee for allowing me to provide written testimony in favor of this bill before you today and would be happy to make myself available, should you have any questions. I ask that you support **Raised Bill 6499, AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.**

21-22



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 6499
Maria Lamb, Director of the Family Support Center at CT Renaissance in
Bridgeport, CT
March 7, 2011

Good afternoon, my name is Maria Lamb and I am the Director of the Family Support Center (FSC) in Bridgeport, CT. One of the FSC's primary responsibilities is to work with FWSN-Truancy referred clients in order to enhance their academic functioning, by increasing school performance, attendance, and at times, behavior.

1. The first reason why it is important to institute a timeline in FWSN filing by schools is because it will ensure students get access to our services more quickly.

We refer these clients to a group called "PASS," which stands for "Promoting Adolescent Skills and Strengths," an eight-week gender-specific educational group whose purpose is to teach basic and necessary life skills to apply to the immediate goal of improved school attendance and performance. Throughout our client's time in PASS, we are in constant contact with school personnel to assess any changes in his or her school functioning. It is incredibly important that clients are able to immediately implement their new skills in an academic setting. The more practice clients receive in applying their knowledge from PASS to school, the more likely they will be successful in using these skills in the long term. The most challenging situation is when we deal with clients who were referred in the spring, participated in our summer programming during their break, and then had to wait until the fall to put into practice their new skill set. As you can imagine, these students are at a serious disadvantage because of this initial delay in accessing our services.

2. The second reason why it is important to institute a timeline is because it will help students retain hope in their future success in school.

It has been our experience that hope is essential for clients in order for them to initiate and sustain positive changes in behavior at school. Unfortunately, if we get a referral after a student has been absent for thirty or more days then it is unlikely they will be able to pass the rest of the year. Despite what clients think (which is usually that they will have a "clean start" for the next new school year), this delay in learning and lack of connection to the school does not usually diminish come fall. If anything, longer periods of time away of school make it all the more difficult for students to return.

3. The third reason why it is important to institute a timeline is so guardians have an opportunity to work with school personnel on addressing this issue.

If the FSC receives the referral earlier in the school year then we are able to work with the client's guardian on preparing for school meetings, establishing a school contact and

learning about his/her child's educational rights. However, the later in the year we receive the referral, the less time we have to work with, and support, the guardian in developing a new relationship with his or her child's school.

For the reasons I mentioned above, I believe this bill will help decrease the amount of repeat offenders, as students will be able to apply new skills immediately and therefore see results, and increase positive communication between home and school. I am also confident the school system will benefit from this bill as they will receive support from community providers earlier in the process. That said, I would like to thank the Education Committee for providing me with an opportunity to voice my support for this bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Maria Lamb
Director, Family Support Center
Connecticut Renaissance
Bridgeport, CT

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Advocating for teachers
and public education

**Connecticut Education
Association**

Governance

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Sheila Cohen, Vice President
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Jeff Leake, Treasurer
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Association

*Testimony of Vincent J. Loffredo
Director of Government Relations*

Connecticut Education Association

Education Committee

Public Hearing

***Re: Raised Bill 6499 Sections 5, 11 & 19
An Act Concerning Minor Revisions To The Education Statutes***

Monday, March 7, 2011

Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. My name is Vincent Loffredo. I'm the Director of Government Relations for the Connecticut Education Association. I'm here today to comment on sections 5, 11, and 19 of **Raised Bill 6499** **An Act Concerning Minor Revisions To The Education Statutes**.

Section 5 modifies subsection (c) of section 10-153f of the Teacher Negotiations Act by requiring that the legislative body or bodies of a school district to receive a copy of the arbitrator or arbitrators decision. CEA opposes amending the Teacher Negotiation Act including this proposed change.

This proposed legislative change is unnecessary. It flies in the face of "home rule" and local control. A local legislative body has the authority to remedy this problem. Current law provides for the arbitrator(s) decision to be sent to each town clerk in the school district(s) involved. If there is a problem where a legislative body is not receiving this information, it has the authority to adopt a resolution or ordinance directing the town clerk to immediately transmit a copy of the arbitrator(s) decision to it.

Section 11 modifies the subsection (c) of section 10-151 of the "Fair Dismissal Law" by changing the date when a teacher who has not attained tenure receives a notice of non-renewal. CEA supports maintaining the current notice date of April 1. This date has been in effect for more than twenty-five years without any problem.

Lastly, section 19 lines 647 to 653 needs to be reexamined to ensure that the “access information in the state-wide mastery examination” that this allows complies with and does not violate the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**.

Thank for the opportunity to comment on **Raised Bill 6499, AAC Minor Revisions To The Education Statutes.**

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Testimony concerning Raised Bill No. 6499
"An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes"
The Rev. Timothy Oslovich, Chairperson
Connecticut Coalition to Save Darfur
March 7, 2011

Good morning, Chairman Fleischmann, Chairwoman Stillman, and members of the Committee. My name is Tim Oslovich. I am a pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Vernon, Connecticut, and I currently serve as the Chairperson of the Connecticut Coalition to Save Darfur. I have been involved in advocacy on behalf of the people of Darfur and Sudan for about five years, calling on leaders in the United States and the United Nations to end the genocide there. The issue of genocide has been very important to my faith community, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which has made working to end the genocide in Darfur one of its advocacy priorities. I am grateful for the opportunity to testify in regard to a section of An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes, House Bill 6499.

Thank you for introducing this important piece of legislation. The issue of genocide is one that desperately needs to be addressed in our educational system in order to empower students to prevent future atrocities. All religious traditions and people of conscience recognize that genocide is one of the worst crimes that plagues humanity. Genocide goes beyond murder and torture in that genocide is the attempt not only to kill individuals but to eradicate an entire group of people based on their ethnicity, race, nationality or religious affiliation. As you know, genocide is the horrific crime of attempting to kill an entire group of people just because of their identity.

Historically, little has been done to prevent the crime of genocide or to stop a genocide once it had begun. Most countries and individuals have stood by as genocide was committed. The twentieth century includes many instances of genocide: The Herero and Namaqua, Armenia, the Holocaust, Cambodia, Bosnia, Burundi, Rwanda, and we are currently seeing the terrible effects of the first genocide of the twenty-first century in Darfur, Sudan. Many people are unaware of any cases of genocide aside from the Holocaust. Since many people do not know that genocide has been committed repeatedly in the past and continues to be a threat today, they are ill-equipped to work for an end to genocide.

Thankfully, this legislation is a small first step in addressing this problem. It is an urgent problem. Genocide has claimed the lives of millions of people, destroyed cultures and left entire countries devastated. It is only by educating our children that we give them the tools they need to work against genocide. I am happy to see that under the proposed legislation, genocide education would be added to the specific topics for which the State Board of education would be required to provide curricular resources. However, I see this as only a first step toward requiring genocide education in Connecticut schools. As you know, teachers have many subjects that they are required to teach, and those which are not required are rarely covered. Genocide education is important enough to

be required in our schools. As has been clearly shown, when it is done well, genocide education has a profound character-forming effect on students and helps them to become better citizens and more responsible members of society. Teachers have expressed a desire for training so that they can appropriately teach what is obviously a very difficult and disturbing topic. Quite simply, in order to do a good job of providing genocide education to Connecticut's students, we need a mandate as well as additional training for teachers. We are hopeful that in future years, when there is not a budget crisis, these steps will be taken.

Genocide education is such a crucial issue that a mandate and additional teacher training resources are appropriate and necessary. We have significant local resources, such as the University of Connecticut, to aid in the assembly of curriculum and training. In addition, there are other organizations, such as Facing History and Ourselves, which have already developed excellent genocide education curriculum which is available free. Costs would be minimal without sacrificing the quality of the materials and training.

In 2007 and 2008, I was able to travel to Rwanda. I visited the genocide memorial in Kigali where 259,000 people are buried. I also visited another memorial: the small Catholic church in Ntarama. The bones of the 5,000 people who were killed there are laid neatly on shelves, and all the items they brought into the church when they sought refuge there are stacked near the front of the building. It is a very disturbing place; a sanctuary was turned into a slaughterhouse. As a parent, one item particularly struck me: a red sippy cup with a white top spattered with blood. To the genocidaires, that small child was just one more "cockroach" to be killed, but that child was just as precious as yours or mine.

Chairwoman Stillman, Chairman Fleischmann, members of the Committee, we have an obligation to those who have suffered and died in past genocides, not only to remember them but also to work for an end to genocide. In a democracy like ours, the way that action begins is by educating citizens so that they can make informed and responsible decisions and take appropriate action. The way that the world begins to change is by educating our children to live differently. "Never again" will only become a reality once our citizens know the past and are empowered to make the future different. Genocide education is a step in that direction.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF TERRI DREW,
DIRECTOR OF STAMFORD YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU,
JUVENILE REVIEW BOARD AND "PATHWAYS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS" (P.A.S.S.)
TRUANCY PROGRAM

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
IN SUPPORT OF RAISED S.B. NO. 6499 AN ACT CONCERNING TRUANCY

MARCH 7, 2011

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. I have a special greeting for Representative Miller who represents my hometown of Stamford.

As the Director of the Stamford Youth Services Bureau, I have had extensive involvement with truancy and juvenile justice issues for the past 7 years. In 2005, I helped establish the Stamford Juvenile Review Board, which diverts first-time juvenile offenders from the court system and re-connects them to their community using the model of Balanced and Restorative Justice. Instead of penalizing young people, we identify the underlying issues that causes them to get into trouble and find solutions based on their strengths. The solutions we use in Stamford include mentoring, community service, tutoring, individual & family therapy, positive activities and other forms of types of restorative justice. Based on my experience, two issues define just about every teen or pre-teen referred to the JRB: habitually truant and failing most classes.

We began to see the need for a specific program designed to address the unique needs of truant students before they get arrested and involved in the juvenile justice system. The P.A.S.S. Program (Pathways to Academic and Social Success) is similar to the JRB in that we conduct panel sessions with community members and work to reconnect the young person back into their family, school and community.

We started the program in the fall of 2009, choosing to pilot it in the middle school from which we had the most JRB referrals. We are working with the guidance counselors and social workers to identify kids that are at risk based on attendance, behavior and grades. We plan to expand the program to all middle schools next year.

I support the truancy provisions in Raised Bill No. 6499 because it will allow the children we serve to access services more quickly. By requiring schools to file FWSNs within a certain number of days, we will ensure that children are served more efficiently.

The need for this measure is great. Last year our Juvenile Probation received 50

FWSN reports in May. School ends in June. This does not allow for any intervention to be implemented and successful. It means that those 50 kids started this fall behind grade level and with no strategies in place to help them be successful for this year. We need to establish uniform practices around the State so that all districts along with SDE can be held accountable for the truancy cases that exist within each district.

This brings me to my proposed amendments:

First, SDE needs to be the central organizing body for truancy programs so that program directors can mount a coordinated effort towards reducing truancy statewide. I've found my participation with Truancy Subcommittee of the FWSN Advisory Board to be extremely valuable to my work in Stamford. I've benefited from the coordination and collaboration this group has created amongst truancy programs statewide by learning about best practices and collaborating with others around the state that are doing this work.

Second, schools should be reporting their truancy efforts to the SDE so that we can keep them accountable in this very important area of the engagement of students. This make school districts even more aware of how seriously the State of Connecticut takes the problem of truancy. In addition, it will allow districts that are successful in their efforts to share their strategies, and will allow struggling districts to get the help they need in engaging students statewide.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Drew
Director, Stamford Youth Services Bureau
Government Center
888 Washington Blvd., 6th Floor
Stamford, CT

Testimony re: HB 6499, an Act Concerning Minor Revision to the Education Statues

Before the Education Committee

March 7, 2011

Submitted by: Beth Johnson, teacher

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleishman, Members of the Committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Beth Johnson and I am here today to speak on the fourth section of Bill 6499.

I am currently a 5th and 6th grade teacher at North Canaan Elementary School, which is a part of the Region 1 School District. We are a K-8 School with just over 300 students. I am a 2001 graduate from Central Connecticut State University with a BS in Elementary Education. I am CT certified K-6. Upon receiving my MS in Educational Technology from Eastern Connecticut State University I inquired with the state about receiving some sort of certification, and was told that none existed. My "specialty" in technology meant I could teach technology K-6. This poses a problem as I work in a K-8 school. The position is currently held by a teacher with a K-8 certification, which no longer exists. I asked what I could do to teach the remaining two grades in my school and was told that the only way this was possible would be to get another degree, perhaps as a Library Media Specialist or a 7-12 degree in another subject area. Being a library media specialist does not make me any more qualified to teach educational technology. I was then told there was no other way. We do not have a large enough population to justify two technology teachers, but as of right now there is no other way to serve our population.

Section 4 of this bill which, "requires the State Board of Education to adopt regulations that create a certification endorsement area in computer and information technology that allows computer and information technology teachers to teach in grades kindergarten to twelve," would allow teachers who have degrees in specialty areas, such as technology, to teach in a K-8 school such as my own. After obtaining a degree in Educational Technology in a Connecticut State School in addition to over 20 CEU hours of professional development in this subject area, I am more than highly qualified to teach this subject matter to all of the students in my school.

There are currently 95 K-8 schools in the state of CT. This means that my predicament is one that is not faced only by me, but by others who would choose to teach technology and other specialized subjects without CT certification available. As the teachers who hold a K-8 certification retire, this problem will become more widespread.

The newly revised Connecticut Common Core of Teachers is prefaced by stating how important it is to teach our students 21st Century Skills to prepare them for this quickly changing world. I am more than qualified to do this in my school. This bill will make it possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Beth Johnson

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of personal introduction.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. DAVIS ():

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I am joined here today by my brother, Nolan, who just finished up his junior year at UConn, a political science major and wanted to check out the state process.

Please join in welcoming him here today.

(Applause.)

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Nice to see you here. Welcome.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 216.

THE CLERK:

On Page 48, Calendar 216, Substitute for House
Bill Number 6499 AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO
THE EDUCATION STATUTES. Favorable Report of the
Committee on Appropriations.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The Chairperson of Education, Representative Fleischmann, you have the floor, sir.

REP. FLRISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill. Will you remark?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. This is our annual minor revisions Bill. It involves a number of small but helpful changes, to education statutes that will do good things for education and the people of Connecticut.

Most notable among them, it would classify American sign language as a world language, allowing students to get credit for that study as a world language in high school in Connecticut.

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk is in possession of an Amendment, LCO Number 5888. I ask that the Clerk please call and that I be given permission to summarize.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Would the Clerk please call LCO 5888, which will be designated House Amendment Schedule "A".

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5888, House "A" offered by
Representatives Fleischmann and Giuliano and Senator
Stillman.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize the Amendment. Any objection? Hearing none, Representative Fleischmann you may proceed with summarization.

REP. RLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, this is a minor but positive change to the education statutes.

Last year, we worked to make sure that all school districts were offering advanced placement courses so that students had an opportunity to earn college credit while in high school.

We didn't draft that as well as we could have, and this Amendment now before us would ensure that all different types of course, including international baccalaureate courses and college level courses that children take in high school will count under that provision of Connecticut General Statutes.

I move adoption.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on adoption. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question, through you, to the proponent of the Amendment.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Mr. Chairman, in lines 10 through 12, your description of the types of courses that you are expecting to promote here, you said, you used the word baccalaureate. You used a few other terms.

Can you describe, though, in the school's AP classes now, what are they missing that this covers, that this changes? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, nothing. An advanced placement course will continue to be covered under statute.

What this does is, it says besides advanced placement courses, we are also acknowledging that

these other college level courses are significant and will meet the state requirement that school systems offer college level course work to the high school students.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

So this really is more in the line of accepting more college credits from accredited universities and colleges throughout the state for high school students to add to their graduation list of credits with they're done?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, sort of. What this does is, it allows school districts that are being told, you have to offer college level work to have a wider array of offerings qualify to meet that requirement.

Our current statute just says AP courses, and it doesn't mention all these other great offerings, so

we're clarifying the statute to make sure that if your school district offers course work at the University of Connecticut or at Eastern Connecticut State University articulated with your high school as part of its offerings that that will satisfy this requirement we have in statute that high schools do give college level offerings.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, so would you say then that this is not a new state mandate, but this is actually relieving for the schools some of that pressure because those school districts that already have the articulation agreements with some of the local colleges and universities, the courses that the students then take would then qualify under this particular statute?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you. That's very helpful. And if I might, how does, if you could describe how, through you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, how this would articulate through the on-line courses that students take? Does that qualify through here? Just for legislative intent.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. If there is a college level on-line course that has been approved by the State Board of Education for college credit, then that, too, would qualify. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And one last question. Is any of the military summer work that some students do, say if they go off to do a military camp if this is prior to college, is that something that they might

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be able to qualify under this? Through you, Mr.

Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

If the State Board of Education approves that as
a college level course, yes. Through you, Mr.

Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

I thank the gentleman for his answer because I
think it is important that this is clear for
legislative intent because our high schools find
themselves in a predicament sometimes because students
have greater interest, great avenues that they want to
go down and we want them to be able to have those and
have those qualify for their high school and when they
go to college, have it qualify for some of their
college credits.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN: ~

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Thank you, Representative. I ask the Chamber to tone down the level of discussion. It's getting a little noisy in here. Thank you so much.

You don't want me to bang the gavel, do you? All right, with that I'll call on Representative LeGejt.

REP. LEGEYT (17th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good afternoon, sir.

REP. LEGEYT (17th):

A question to the Chairman of the Education Committee and then a comment, if you would.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. LEGEYT (17th):

In the Amendment language, it says that new language is provided that requires that a program be approved by the State Board of Education and my question is simply, why was that not in the Bill prior, the language that's in place prior, and what was the thinking that required it to be put in place now? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

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REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I think the simplest way to put it was that the statute that we're talking about was enacted last year and we were trying to align with a program that we knew was available for advanced placement.

And it was done quickly, and we failed to consider the fact that there are all sorts of districts that have all these other great offerings that are college level but are not called AP.

So we're just trying to correct something that we did in undue haste a year ago. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative LeGeyt.

REP. LEGEYT (17th):

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

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Chairman of the Education, I'd like to pose a question through you, if I may?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Sir, in the explanation, the OLR explanation, it says that the State Board of Ed is required to put together a genocide education curriculum and then to encourage local boards to include it in their curriculum.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, is that going to be a mandate, one. And two, who asked for this curriculum to be developed? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. I had difficulty hearing, but I believe the question was not on the Amendment.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you. It got even noisier after I made that last announcement.

REP. BETTS (78th):

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Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Betts, if you could please repeat your question.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Yes. He's correct. I'm not speaking actually on the Amendment, so I'll hold my question until afterwards.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Would you care to remark further on the Amendment? Care to remark further on the Amendment?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor of the Amendment, please signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

All those opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it. The Resolution is adopted.

Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, I'd like to ask the Chairman of Education if I could.

In the explanation it says that the State Board of Education has been asked to develop a genocide education curriculum and materials available and to encourage local and regional school districts to include this.

I have two questions. One is, what led to the development of this request.

And two, is this a mandate on the local school districts? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, let me answer the questions out of order. The second question, is this a mandate? No, this is not. This is explicitly relegated to a section of statute that allows districts to go ahead and avail themselves of curriculum if they want to, and not if they don't want to. So it is not a mandate on local school districts.

To the other question about the impetus for this legislation. We already have Holocaust awareness as part of the curriculum available in this section of statute, and those who teach about the Holocaust are troubled by the fact that it's not a broader

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definition that we have in statute because we all know that in addition to the horrors that occurred during World War II, there have been other genocidal horrors that have occurred during the last couple of centuries across the globe.

And it didn't make sense to simply focus in on one of them when there are many that are worthy of attention. And so the State Department has indicated to us that it will not be in the least bit difficult for them to expand the current Holocaust curriculum they have to be a genocide awareness curriculum. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the gentleman. So this really came from the State Department of Education, if I understand you correctly.

The other question I would ask, through you, Mr. Speaker, is there a minimum grade level at which this course could be taught? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

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REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that local school districts are left with the ability to avail themselves of the curriculum and choose when to offer it.

I don't believe we as a state are interfering with that local control. Local school boards get to decide when it's offered.

I think typically something of this gravity is not offered until children are past a certain age where they can handle something that is this weighty and frightening. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Betts.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Thank you very much, sir, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good afternoon, madam.

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REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this Bill. As has been previously stated, it makes small but important changes.

For example, adopting uniform definitions of excused and unexcused absences, the number of requests from the State Department of Education.

It eliminates certain statutory filing requirements. Again, small but important changes, and I urge the Chamber's support of this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Would you care to remark further on the Bill as amended? Care to remark further on the Bill as amended?

If not, staff and guests please come to the Well of the House. Members take their seats. The machine will be opened.

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 vote has been properly cast.

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

The Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 6499 as amended by House "A".

Total Number Voting	142
Necessary for Passage	72
Those voting Yea	119
Those voting Nay	23
Those absent and not voting	9

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The Bill as amended is passed.

Are there any announcements or introductions?

Representative Urban.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the purposes of an announcement.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

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So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Continuing on calendar page 14, Calendar 522,
House Bill Number 6303.

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 15, Calendar 523, House
Bill Number 6499.

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

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Continuing on calendar page 15, Calendar 524,
House Bill Number 6490.

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

THE CHAIR:

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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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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.

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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.)