

**PA12-120**

SB0299

Education	1773-1777, 1802-1805, 1819-1822, 1832-1837, 1840-1855, 2031-2034, 2079-2084, 2365	46
House	8265-8268, 8288-8290	7
<u>Senate</u>	<u>2268-2271, 2490</u>	<u>5</u>

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**EDUCATION  
PART 6  
1696 – 2025**

**2012**

71  
cip/cd/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 5, 2012  
12:00 P.M.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Okay. All right. Seeing no further questions, you are free to go. You are free to go.

GEORGE HOSEY: Thank you all very much.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. And best performance as a leading witness, okay. We'll go to Senator McLachlan to be followed by student Matthew Bedard.

SENATOR MCLACHLAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm Senator Mike McLachlan from Danbury, and I'm grateful to be here today. And I appreciate that the leadership has decided to consider some important legislation before us today, House Bill 5357, AN ACT CONCERNING A DEAF CHILD BILL OF RIGHTS, and Senate Bill 299, AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

I've submitted written testimony, and I'd just like to highlight a few points, very specifically House Bill 5357. I'm grateful to my constituent, Mary Silvestri, who left, I guess because the interpreter has left also. But I want to thank Mary Silvestri and the hearing impaired advocates for their work on this.

Also, I want to thank you for last year where you considered and approved and this Legislature passed the American Sign Language Initiative, which granted special credits to people for American Sign Language in school. And this has all been done with the help and assistance of Representative Joe Taborsak, my colleague from Danbury.

Also, I'd like to call to your attention Senate Bill 299. In this case, what I'm focusing on is the Junior Reserve Officer

Training Corps, commonly referred to as ROTC. And with us today, who I hope you'll be able to hear from a little later on, is Lieutenant Mark Dwinells, who is the leader of the Bethel High School JROTC program.

Lieutenant Mark is here today with six of his very distinguished looking cadets from the Bethel High School JROTC. And I'd like to ask them all to stand just so you can see how sharp they are. We're very proud of the ROTC program at Bethel High School, also at Danbury High School.

Lieutenant Colonel Bryan Holmes of the Danbury High School program was unable to be here in person today and has submitted testimony that I hope you will have an opportunity to review. The ROTC program, and I won't steal Lieutenant Dwinells' thunder, but, is 200 students in a relatively small town high school.

I would say he wins the blue ribbon and the gold medal, if you will, for running a terrific program. And I think that by us focusing on the qualifications of the leadership and instructors in the ROTC program, it just goes to show how important this program is.

The success of these students, when they move on from high school, is tremendous, and I hope we can gain your support for this today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. A couple of quick questions for you. On the first bill you mentioned, AN ACT CONCERNING A DEAF BILL OF RIGHTS, you have been a quite outspoken opponent of any unfunded mandates on school systems.

HBS 357

And this bill, combined with some of the very logical suggestions that advocates put forward to go with it, could be interpreted as an unfunded mandate. And I'm just curious as to whether, even in that event, you would be still supportive of the measure.

SENATOR MCLACHLAN: Well, I grant that there are many times that I have spoken out about unfunded mandates and feel very strongly about that. But there are other times, like when we, in this Legislature, passed coverage for autism, which I supported.

So I think that there are times that I must set aside my priority of not passing out unfunded mandates. In this case, I believe that the fiscal impact on municipalities is nil or minimal at best and is certainly an appropriate thing for us to be considering. But I acknowledge that there are times that I'm a loud advocate against unfunded mandates.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Well, I'm glad to hear that. In this instance, you're recognized, you're giving recognition to the profound needs that we would be serving and to the fact that the costs would be minimal relative to the costs we're paying today, having children who are not getting the education to which our state constitution entitles them. So I really do appreciate that stance.

My other question relates to the minor revisions bill and the sections on Junior ROTC. Like you, I was very concerned and somewhat exercised last year when I learned that legislation we had passed to try and make it clear that in fact Junior ROTC programs could continue just as they were in Connecticut was being interpreted by the

SB299

Bureau of Certification in a way that was getting in the way.

I was told that the State Department of Education addressed the issue administratively and that Junior ROTC programs are able to function fine under the current interpretation of the State Department of Education. So I'm just wondering, given that status update, why you're still advocating for this legislation that's before us.

SENATOR MCLACHLAN: Well, thank you for that point. I would like to say, and I'll certainly hope that you'll ask this question of Lieutenant Dwinells later on, it is my understanding that there are issues related to the recognition of the individual instructors that has been impacted by this legislation passed last year.

And so perhaps it does need a bit of fine tuning. I have not had the conversation you've had with the Department who is saying that we're okay. If that is, in fact, true, and we've looked at all points, so be it. Certainly, doing something administratively can be much more efficient than us having to pull through the legislative process.

But this did seem to be an appropriate legislative fix based upon the feedback we were getting over the summer.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Well, we'll see. I think that we want to make sure that we have a fix that is clear and is permanent. I don't see any reason for the issue to get revisited time and again, and so we'll be talking with the Department.

If, for instance, their administrative fix is one that is good so long as we have the

current Commissioner but could change with a new Commissioner, then legislative action could indeed be fully appropriate.

Are there other questions from Members of the Committee? If not, we thank you for your time and your advocacy. We will hear next from Matthew Bedard.

MATTHEW BEDARD: (Inaudible).

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Now it is. The red light says that your mic is on.

MATTHEW BEDARD: All right. I'm Matthew Bedard, and I was born profoundly deaf. I currently wear two cochlear implants that help me hear, to hear better.

HB5357

Right now, I'm a sophomore at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island, and I'm working towards a bachelor's degree in culinary arts and nutrition science. And I just want to thank the Education Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak before you today.

Growing up in the public school system wasn't easy for me, especially as I went through middle school and high school. I felt like my coordinators didn't really understand what my needs were, because I was the only student in my class with a hearing loss.

For example, during our PPT meetings, my parents and I would really have to explain to them how my hearing works for them to fully understand. When I got my second cochlear implant, they thought I could hear perfectly by just turning it on.

100  
cip/cd/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 5, 2012  
12:00 P.M.

JAMES MCGAUGHEY: Yeah.

REP. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, Representative. Are there other comments or questions from Members of the Committee? If not, thank you very much for your testimony.

JAMES MCGAUGHEY: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: We will now hear from Nick Damraksa, and I apologize if I butchered your name, to be followed by Elaine Zimmerman.

NICK DAMRAKSA: (Inaudible). Okay. Good afternoon, Madam Chairwoman, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: I think it's appropriate to say Mr. Chair when Madam Chairwoman is not present.

NICK DAMRAKSA: Very well, Mr. Chair. I am Cadet Commander Nick Damraksa. I am the Chief of Staff at the Bethel High School NJROTC unit. I am here in support of bill, of Senate Bill, oh, House Bill, excuse me, 299.

I am a very active member of our unit as well as a perpetual honor student, a leading member in our school's plays and musicals, a star player on the varsity track team, and I am also involved in three national, three national honor societies throughout the school. Needless to say, I am a very busy student.

One reason I became involved in the unit was because there's no season for ROTC. Many students, including myself, have become very



involved throughout the school and simply do not have the time to take on extra activities. The constant stress of juggling too many activities can easily wear a person down both mentally and physically.

However, ROTC provides relief for that stress. When entering the unit, Master Sergeant and Commander both emphasized the fact that each cadet should play on their own level, meaning that they can get involved to whatever extent they want.

Some cadets become very involved, attending every community service event we hold or are after school every day for marching drill practice. They live, breathe, and sleep ROTC. Others, however, only attend class, absorb the information, and aren't seen until the next day. And that's fine.

Commander and Master Sergeant understand that the this, that, excuse me, that this is the level they want to play at, and there's nothing wrong with that, because they know that those kids will display the traits that they have learned in class.

We see it throughout the school. All clubs and teams are trying to have their members display the same traits as the cadets. Even the honor societies are trying to get to our level. With the unit improving itself constantly, the rest of the school is growing exponentially.

And credit for that growth can only be given to the cadets who are the heart and soul of the program. As such an integral part of our program, we make sure to provide opportunities for the cadets to show their true potential.

And those opportunities are not bound by the school year.

Several summer programs are offered for all the different types of cadets in our unit. We often send cadets to Leadership Academy and Sail Training, multiple forms of STEM training, Connecticut State Police Academy, Boys and Girls State, and even the Naval Academy Summer Seminar.

These opportunities provide the cadets the, excuse me, these opportunities provide the cadets with a change to blossom and show their true potential. And that improvement in our cadets leads to an improvement in our school and our community as well. Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for that very clear testimony, for all that you do in your school and your community, for timing that almost exactly matched the bell. Very military discipline that you showed.

NICK DAMRAKSA: Thank you, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Any comments or questions from Members of the Committee? Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for being here along with other members of your ROTC unit.

I can tell you that we're all very proud of you and all that you do to not only just improve the quality of your educational environment for the students and also for our state and also for your future potential in helping us as well.

Could you tell me what, where some of the graduates from your program typically go once you're out of high school?

NICK DAMRAKSA: The great thing about the program is it attracts many different types of people. So we actually, in our senior class, many people are entering the military. We have two girls who are already enlisted. We have two who have joined the Marine Corps and are waiting to be deployed.

We have our Battalion Commander, who is sitting back there actually, is, has been accepted to the Naval Academy. Many people take scholarships to the military. However, it's not really a recruitment opportunity. Many people simply go to the class for the lessons that it teaches.

And I, myself, will just be going to college afterwards. So it provides you with tools to open up doors that you weren't accessible to beforehand. However, it doesn't lead you in any specific direction. It helps you find your, the way you want to go.

REP. BOUCHER: Thank you so much for making the journey here and taking time away from your important work as well to highlight this issue. And you know you have a lot of support hopefully on this Committee for making sure that we keep the program intact, healthy, and alive for future cadets as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Any other questions for the young cadet? If not, thank you for your testimony.

NICK DAMRAKSA: Thank you, sir.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Yes, absolutely.

SENATOR STILLMAN: -- rather than sitting behind their desks, because I think, as we have these discussions about reading and children being able to sort of become more involved in their learning activities, from reading to math to science to whatever it is, starting at an early age, that that movement, you know, gets the oxygen to the brain, as they say.

And I think we can't forget about that. I know that there's a lot that goes on in the school in the course of a school day, but this is just too important an activity, and it's part of learning, so --

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Yeah. Yeah. Thank you for raising that, Senator Stillman, and we do know, especially with the little kids, that they're going to be learning moving around and playing, and they're going to learn language that way too. So there's no conflict between the physical activity and the literacy.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Right. Right. Thank you.  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Other comments or questions for Ms. Zimmerman? If not, thank you for your testimony and your hard work.

ELAINE ZIMMERMAN: Thank you very much.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: We go next to Madison Denny to be followed by Senator Scott Frantz. Welcome.

MADISON DENNY: Hi. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Cadet Madison Denny, and I am the Battalion Commander of the Bethel NJROTC unit. This fall, I will be attending

SB299

the Naval Academy Prep School and continue on to the Naval Academy as the class of 2017, a future in which ROTC has undoubtedly prepared me for.

Currently, 205 of the 948 students in Bethel High School are enrolled in our program. I am honored to have the privilege of leading such a committed and close-knit group of students. ROTC is unique, as it is made up of people from all walks of life and all levels of talent.

We have varsity football players, award-winning photographers, valedictorians, and class clowns. The program aims to be inclusive to all students and as such provides a one-of-a-kind leadership experience. Most other programs are small and homogeneous.

The vast differences of the people in ROTC create an environment much like the real world. Each summer, the Northeast hosts a two-week Leadership Academy in Sail Training, also known as LAST. I never had, or I have had the opportunity to not only attend the program but return the next year as a cadet aide.

While the first summer I spent at LAST was useful, it was very information-oriented. Only when I returned as a cadet aide did I truly learn what it meant to be a leader. For two weeks, I was directly responsible for the welfare of my cadets, and the result was overwhelmingly rewarding.

It was a life-changing experience, one that drove me towards my current plans for the future. The skills that I learned at Leadership Academy and applied the next year were invaluable when brought back to the unit.

It is the cadets in charge who make changes, and those who came before me did an outstanding job.

Since my freshman year, the unit has doubled in size, transforming from a company to a battalion and all because of the hard work and inspirational nature of the program. With 25 percent of the school involved in the program, it has had a profound, positive effect on the school's environment and on the lives of the students. Thank you for your time.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Twenty-five percent of the student body, I've never heard a higher figure. Do you think that's the most involvement in the state of Connecticut?

MADISON DENNY: Definitely in the state of Connecticut, yes, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: So you can call yourself the commander of the largest ROTC group in the state of Connecticut.

MADISON DENNY: Yes, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Yes, ma'am. Okay. Are there questions? Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And how proud I am of the district of which Bethel is a part of and certainly also as a woman leader as well. I might add my kudos to you, because there aren't that many places, really, other than maybe Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, that young people can actually take on leadership roles quite that way.

And it's not easy, is it, to get everyone in line and have them follow your direction, and

particularly at certain ages. But I am curious about your enrollment of the percentages of young ladies versus gentlemen that are a part of your particular troop.

MADISON DENNY: I don't know the exact numbers, but I do know we have a pretty high ratio. In some of the classes, because they're broken up just based on the grade level and how to fit it in the schedule during the day, there are some classes where there's more females in it than males. But overall, I think it's roughly between a quarter and a third are females.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you very much for that. And also may I inquire as to what level of high school you're in at the moment?

MADISON DENNY: I'm a senior.

SENATOR BOUCHER: You are a senior. And you're going off to a Naval Academy Prep School after this?

MADISON DENNY: Yes, ma'am.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Congratulations. Good luck. And the future bodes well for the United States of America with young people like you at the helm. Thank you.

MADISON DENNY: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Any other questions for the cadet before us? If not, thank you very much for your testimony.

MADISON DENNY: Thank you, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: We will next hear from Senator Frantz to be followed by Michael Kaluta.

district that chooses to make it but maybe see if there's a way we can include it. And, hopefully, maybe talking with the Chairs after this meeting, there might be some language, I'm not yet sure, but, again, thank you for your testimony. As you know, it's a subject area dear to my heart as well.

SENATOR FRANTZ: Thank you.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

SENATOR FRANTZ: Thank, you're welcome. Thank you, all.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: We move now to Michael Kaluta to be followed by Frank Carrano.

MICHAEL KALUTA: Good afternoon, Mrs. Chair and Mr. Chair. I'm Cadet Michael Kaluta, and I serve as a Battalion Executive Officer in the Bethel High School NJROTC program. And I'm here to support the Bill 299.

My role in the unit consists of helping the Battalion Commander with any issues she may have, making sure that the department heads keep up with their main tasks, and, most importantly, lead by example.

One of the reasons why I'm so successful today is because of what the NJROTC program has done for me and what it has taught me through the great leadership of Commander Dwinells and Master Sergeant Meehan. It has prepared me for the future, and I am ready to take on anything.



I believe the most important skill NJROTC teaches cadets is how to be a good person and a U.S. citizen. But to be honest, it does come with some perks. How many 17-year-old kids can say they've had the courage and motivation to speak to the Connecticut State Legislature about something they believe is one of the most important aspects in their school?

NJROTC has taught me to learn, connect, and act. You must be educated first and see where you can apply to, and then you must let your actions build your legacy. This is where people can be good citizens and act in a manner that society feels respectful. NJROTC also teaches cadets marksmanship and marching drill.

Now, many of you may now be thinking to yourselves, they let cadets shoot in school? Yes, we do. It is executed under the guidance of Commander and Master Sergeant who are both certified marksmanship instructors by the United States government.

But the Master Sergeant has impeccable skills since he was a weapons expert in the United States Marine Corps for 21 years. Both marksmanship and marching drill are not just hands-on activities but also teach cadets to focus and have discipline.

They need to focus on holding their breath and squeezing the trigger. They need to forget about everything else that is going on with their life and focus on the little black dot and the little front sight. And they succeed in marksmanship, because they are taught to focus.

It's all about discipline, and ROTC teaches you just that. As a freshman, we learned basic first aid. This year, about 90 cadets will learn basics such as CPR and how to apply an AED and how to control bleeding. While these skills sound extremely basic, they are the true skills of a basic first responder.

Each year, the freshman class learns this. By learning this knowledge, I became interested in the medical field. And with the Master Sergeant's recommendation, I enrolled in the Bethel High School EMT program. We have numerous kids from our unit enrolled in the class every year.

The main reason cadets want to take this course is to learn more about the medical field, but they also want another challenge. And if anyone is, if you're, is an EMT or someone in that profession, you know what I'm talking about. And the cadets enrolled in the class succeed with honors.

I plan to attend, I plan to enlist in the United States Army and pursue my MOS as a medic. Overall, the NJROTC program is one of the best programs in our high school and teaches cadets hands-on skills that we can use in the future to succeed with anything they do. Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for that excellent testimony. I'm wondering which, what year of high school are you in?

MICHAEL KALUTA: I'm a senior.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: You're a senior in high school. May I say when I was a senior in college, I looked about five years younger than you and seemed about five years less responsible. So

Junior ROTC is clearly doing something right.  
Are there questions or comments? Madam Chair.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. Welcome. How come, I mean, why do, why, obviously, this program has meant a lot to you, and it's done a lot for you. But what took you in that direction as you were, you know, how old were you when you made the decision and why?

MICHAEL KALUTA: When I started the program? I honestly didn't even know that we had an ROTC program when I was in the middle school until about eighth grade, and then they came to the middle school, and they did a presentation, and I just seemed interested in it, and then it's brought me to this point, so --

SENATOR STILLMAN: Has it gotten, has it kept you out of trouble?

MICHAEL KALUTA: Yes, it has.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Well, then the, they're doing a great job then, but in many ways they are. I wish you great success, and stay safe.

MICHAEL KALUTA: Thank you, ma'am.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Other comments or questions from Members of the Committee? Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for your wonderful testimony. Quick question. You mentioned a couple things that you took, it kind of sounded like additional work. I know you talked about marksmanship, and you also talked about some first aid training. Were these done primarily during

your high school curricula, or are they done as additional during your ROTC training?

MICHAEL KALUTA: Yes, they are taught during class, but there are also many countless hours after school to teach the cadets more about certain aspects of the curriculum.

REP. ACKERT: Great. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Any other follow-ups? Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for being here today being such a good example of the students at Bethel High School. And, you know, I'm very impressed, because not only will you be a good marksman, but you also are going to be studying medicine as well at the same time, which is wonderful.

Do you find that your particular group enjoys a certain level of esteem within your school community and thereby making it something that people, you know, would aspire to be involved in?

MICHAEL KALUTA: Yes. A lot of kids, especially this year, have refrained to wanting to have joined the program their freshman year and not having that because they didn't choose to do it their freshman year, but, yes, many kids want to be in the program, yes.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Congratulations to you and to your leadership. Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Further questions? If not, thank you very much. Good luck to you.

MICHAEL KALUTA: Thank you.

135  
cip/cd/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 5, 2012  
12:00 P.M.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Frank Carrano to be followed by Michael Kaluta.

A VOICE: That was Michael Kaluta.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Oh. Oh. I apologize. To be followed by Richard Kim.

FRANK CARRANO: Good afternoon. I think I'm that person, but my name is Frank Carrano. And I appreciate this opportunity to speak on Raised Bill 300, AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. I'm here as the chair of the Branford Board of Education and the President of CCJEF, Connecticut Coalition on Justice in Education Funding.

This bill that's before you we feel is a fundamental issue with respect to equity and adequacy for our school children. The fact that this bill would move to establish universal access to quality preschool programs for children who reside in priority school districts like expanding the School Readiness Program we feel is a step in the right direction.

And economic grounds alone, expanding this provision of publicly funded preschool programs is probably the most compelling educational investment that the State of Connecticut can make. There have been studies done, some of which are part of the CCJEF, the work that CCJEF has done.

Most famous of those rigorous research studies is involved at high school (inaudible), a preschool program, and two other programs, and all of those studies strongly support the educational, the economic response to early educational opportunities for students.

of having the kind of impact that we think it could have and should have on the ultimate success of our school reform program.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Well, first, I'll say I've heard numbers higher than 7500.

FRANK CARRANO: Possibly.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Second, I'll say, you've succeeded in being quite Solomonic there. I'm not sure I was able to tell where you came down. Unfortunately, we don't have the luxury of saying, hmm, more for everything.

We really are faced with limited resources, and we'll have to prioritize. But that's our job, and I'll, I won't press you any farther on that. Are there questions or comments from Members of the Committee? If not, thank you for your time and your testimony.

FRANK CARRANO: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Now, it's been brought to my attention that the time of people who have traveled here from Bethel is not infinite, so what I'm going to do is ask that Richard Kim, Devon Smith, Matthew Correnty, and Lieutenant Mark Dwinells all come forward together. And we've got some extra seats up there.

Maybe two of you can grab seats up front, and two, and some of you sit behind, and, if possible, you can just sort of share together here your testimony so that you can get back to Bethel without getting in trouble with your commanders or your family.

DEVON SMITH: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am Cadet Lieutenant Commander Devon Smith, and I am the Battalion Operations Officer of

SB299

the Bethel NJROTC unit. I am both honored and humbled to stand, sit before you today to talk about the wonderful opportunities that this program has to offer in support of Senate Bill 299.

I have always had a strong attention to detail and a high level of organization. As the Battalion Operations Officer, I am able to use these skills to plan, organize, and execute every event that our unit is involved with. I know how to analyze a situation and figure out what needs to be done.

I have learned to be mission-oriented and understand the Commander's intent and begin with the end in mind. I can use these skills to lead to the successful execution of any event. I can use my strong administration skills to document every step of the planning process and to ensure that there is an active level of communication between everyone involved.

Most recently, we held our annual NJROTC military ball. I can assure you, this event is not like typical high school dances. This year, we had over 600 guests in attendance, including the entire corps of cadets, their dates, many prominent students in our school, parents, veterans, members of our board of selectmen and board of education, and our guest of honor, Mr. John Ratzenberger.

Two-thirds of the military ball is ceremony, which includes the parading of the colors, ceremonial reenactments, speeches, toasting, as well as the military tradition of parading the beef. This formal event is planned months ahead of time with the help of our wonderful booster club, but mostly, the evening is run by cadets.

This may sound a little surprising to you that a group of high school students could cheerfully take hold in life and run such a formal event. But ROTC has introduced us to a level of class, elegance, and sophistication that most people do not learn until well into their adult life, and some do not at all.

ROTC doesn't just teach young men and women how to be leaders. It has real-world applications. This type of tangible education gives students the skills to be life-long learners and responsible, independent citizens who can graduate from high school and welcome life's challenges with maturity and wisdom. Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. Why don't each of you, we'll ask questions afterwards. Why don't we have you all speak?

RICHARD KIM: Hello, ladies and gentlemen. I am Cadet Richard Kim, the Battalion Master Chief and a senior in the NJROTC program. I am testifying on, to support Senate Bill 299. As the Battalion Master Chief, I act as the foreman between cadets and the Battalion Commander. I am the person that is the one with the boots on the deck.

If Commander or Master Sergeant needs something to be done, they can count on me to be a leader to the cadets. The strength of the corps of cadets is not, does not come from the leadership. It comes from the cadets themselves.

Looking back to my freshman year, I remember I had a sense of longing to belong to a club. I thought I would take NJROTC and see how it was. I don't think I could have had found a



better program. There were some people I looked up to and wanted to be like them. As the cadets progress in the program, we learn to do things that need to be taken care of without being told to do so.

So in other words, when in charge, take charge. Now, as a Battalion Master Chief, I need to know all the cadets and be sort of an older brother to all of them. Every cadet is different. Some are varsity athletes, some are academically gifted, and some are average high school students that want to graduate and go to college.

There are also shy and outgoing cadets. But no matter what kind of person they are, the JROTC program brings out teamwork and camaraderie in all the cadets. In our basic leadership training, the cadets must go through physical, mental, and emotional hardships together.

While the cadets get hands-on experience on leadership while at the basic leadership training, they also get to see the older cadets using the leadership skills they developed over the years. As a senior, it is important that I get out of the high school mindset and start preparing for college.

At this point, I have an important leadership position, and the other cadets in leadership positions and I will be leaving behind a legacy. How many high school students will be able to say that they left behind a legacy that will help many other students throughout high school?

If there is anything that I have learned in high school, it is that I will never forget. It is the things that Master Sergeant and

Commander have taught me are the things I will not forget. These life skills will stick with me for my entire life. They have taught me so much that it is impossible for me to imagine where I would be if I didn't take ROTC. The program has certainly changed my life.

Finally, ROTC has shown me what I want to do in life. Through the program, I have gained confidence that I will succeed in what I wish to pursue. I am ready for life's challenges, as I have been prepared by this program. Now, I would like to see more ROTC programs in our state so that more young leaders will emerge and become the future of this great nation. Thank you very much.

MATTHEW CORRENTY: Good afternoon, Mrs. Chair and the rest of the Education Committee. I am Cadet Lieutenant Matthew Correnty of the Bethel High School NJROTC program. As a senior looking back at my freshman and sophomore years in high school, I didn't have a plan or know what to pursue in my later high school and college years.

I was a young, average student and didn't realize that I wasn't going to make it into the major league baseball at that time. I joined NJROTC not because I loved the military and wanted to join but because I was curious and open to new clubs and activities. Little did I know that my life drastically changed.

Being under the wing of fantastic instructors such as Lieutenant Commander Dwinells and Master Sergeant Meehan, our Associate Naval Science Instructor, they have taught me more life skills than I could have ever learned in another classroom club. They have taught me to pursue my dreams that have some cool factor, as Commander likes to say.

Our program allows junior or NS3 cadets to undergo aviation training and even use those skills to take an introductory flight in a four-seater Cessna aircraft. Aviation training through ROTC and the encouragement of the instructors and my fellow cadets solidified my interest in flying.

Next year, I will be attending Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, which has been called the Harvard of the Sky by News Times Magazine. Along with this, I was nominated for a four-year Navy ROTC scholarship. It is safe for me to say that most of my guidance and instruction to my planned future is owed to Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps, the instructors, and lifelong friends that I've made through the program.

To conclude my testimony, I would like to state that it will be a great honor for me to say that I will graduate high school with four years of NJROTC training that I will use to guide me through my life ahead. I admire my task through the program and can only wish that students from all around the state will have the same opportunity. Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much.  
Lieutenant, would you --

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Madam Chairwoman, thank you. Thank you for taking the time to hear us today. Distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you. I am Lieutenant Commander Mark Dwinells, the Senior Naval Science instructor at the Bethel High School, the public school at Bethel there where we have the Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps.

After nearly 22 years in the Navy after graduating from Bethel High School, I spent nearly 22 years in the Navy and then came back, I am now in my 11th year as an educator here in the state of Connecticut.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Senator McLachlan, Senator Boucher, and other Members of the Committee for supporting Senate Bill 299. It is clear that there has been a Department of Education policy change in support of Junior ROTC, and the certification standards have been clarified.

And I would like to say I fully support the codification of those certification standards. That clear language in Senate Bill 299 simplifies the process and attracts veterans to our state. And I think you've heard from the cadets that the program is very important to them, and I'd like to think that we could expand the Junior ROTC program in the state of Connecticut.

We find ourselves in a time where the respect and admiration for military members is perhaps at a high in our country since World War II. Education is trending toward educators who are highly effective as well as being highly qualified. But unfortunately, we find ourselves in the state of Connecticut with being number one in having the highest achievement gap.

As an experienced educator, I can say that the key to excellence in public schools is built on rigor, relevance, and relationships. Rigor, from a military personnel standard, is always being very mission-oriented. You always keep going until the job is done. You never leave anybody behind. You assess the students based on their true performance.

And we do a lot of project-based learning as well, which makes our program very rigorous. There's a lot of relevance to the cadets as you hear. There's a, it's a cadet-run program, whether that be in our school-wide 9/11 commemoration or one of our student activity run events, one of our community service events. There's a lot of relevance to the JROTC programs and a great deal of community involvement.

In addition, there's a great deal of relationship building in the program. In public education as an educator, we call that differentiated instruction. In the military, we call that tailored leadership. Both are very applicable, of course, in public education.

But in the military, the where-we-go-one-we-go-all approach, I think that serves well toward addressing some of the issues that we have in public education. And the cadets can tell you that it's my personal motto, and I tell them when the going gets tough, the touch build bridges.

Those bridges are supportive relationships with other people that can help them. The JROTC helps them connections to learning. It helps them absorb and internalize what they learn and then act upon those core values.

In closing, I know that military personnel do not have a monopoly on quality education. They do not have a monopoly on teaching core values or character. And they do not have a monopoly on being highly effective teachers. They simply don't.

But they are, however, preeminently qualified and by nature of the respect afforded them by the general public are well-positioned to positively impact the character of all students and thereby narrow the achievement gap. They do, as Representative Fleischmann alluded to earlier, serve as a bridge to civic education.

They are, they keep the students very active in classes. We do teach personal finance. And, Senator Boucher, in answer to your question, there are 71 young ladies in the program out of 205 cadets, 33 percent, ma'am.

So I would thank the Committee for please supporting Senate Bill 299 and codifying the standards for certification for Junior ROTC instructors. Thank you very much. Pending your questions, that concludes my testimony.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. You said you grew up in Bethel. Did you join, were you a member of the Junior ROTC then?

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: No, ma'am. I established the Junior ROTC program in Bethel High School.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Oh, you did? When you returned.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Yes, ma'am, upon, after I retired from the Navy, 22 years of active duty, I came back and started the program.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Well, first of all, thank you for your service --

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Thank you, ma'am.

SENATOR STILLMAN: -- in the Navy and your continuing service to young people at Bethel High School. They are a wonderful example of your fine leadership and the value of this program. And last year when we encountered some problems, we were, we all, how shall I put this, they were all hands on deck --

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Thank you. I appreciate that.

SENATOR STILLMAN: -- to try and resolve it. We had a new Commissioner who hadn't a clue what this was all about. I think he'd been appointed by the Board and the Governor for about two days, and then we, this issue landed on his desk.

And so many of us in this Committee just were so anxious so that there wasn't any damage done this past year until we could get here and do the right thing and fix it, as you say, codify it permanently in the statute. So, but I do want to thank all the cadets for being here. I wish them well.

You're a great example of what our young people can achieve and leadership that you're all exhibiting and that you, sir, have exhibited to these young people. How, you said there were over 200 in your Junior RO --

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Two hundred and five, yes, ma'am. And 138 freshman out of the upcoming class of 240 --

SENATOR STILLMAN: Wow.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: -- have signed up for the program. So we're going to be approaching 275, 300, something like that, next year, so, which is --

SENATOR STILLMAN: That's great. Do, if I may just quickly ask each of the cadets that are here, do you play a role in recruiting your class, the new freshman class members to, or even in the middle school, because I understand that there's outreach into the middle school? Are you involved in recruiting of young people into the program?

MATTHEW CORRENTY: Well, all of us really enjoy the program, so all of us never have anything bad to say, and we always like to pass the good word. So we encourage all of the students to at least give it a try if they may or may not like it, but, yes, we do. We highly encourage the program.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Talk about the program at the middle school.

DEVON SMITH: Every year, we go down to our middle school, and we talk to the eighth graders about all the different programs that they have available to them at the high school. And one of them is the ROTC program. And this year we went down, and we showed them a PowerPoint presentation with pictures of us sailing and flying and doing marching drill.

And we had a presentation of the marching drill. And that is always very helpful to, because in eighth grade, I know when I was in eighth grade I had no idea that this program even existed. And then the unit came down and gave this presentation, and I was like, wow, that looks really cool.

And so that is honestly what got me involved in it. And so it gives kids who have no idea that this program even existed an opportunity to join and blossom in the unit, so --



SENATOR STILLMAN: (Inaudible) add anything?

RICHARD KIM: Well, when you're, when you go into high school as a freshman, and you realize that you're back at the bottom of the food chain, after you come into high school after eighth grade, you realize that you're again at the bottom. So what happens is I guess for me especially was I kind of looked up towards the seniors and juniors and seniors to see who I would want to be like.

And when I looked through the ROTC program, I saw so many seniors, that they had some kind of like air around them that was different from every other person in the school. And I said, well, why don't I try to join it and see what it can do for me?

And I joined it, and it was, I guess it's the fact that the seniors and juniors that lead by example have that kind of influence in the school for the other cadets that they tend to come in. So I guess we are indirectly recruiting them by leading by example.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, all. I'm sure if I was in, when I was in eighth grade, if I had seen anyone come, any of the students who were a little older than I am looking as wonderful as you all do and as such a great example of what they can achieve, I would say I would have been greatly influenced by it as well.

So I wish you all the best, and good luck. And thank you so much for coming today and sharing your viewpoint and letting us know about your futures. So thank you. Thank you, Lieutenant. Anyone else? Yes, Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you to all of you. You certainly make us all proud, me in particular. And I have to tell you that your statistics of 33 percent, is it, of recruiting young women is certainly better than our record here in the legislature, which I think we barely get to 20 or 25 percent.

So you're doing an outstanding job, and I know that the students and the cadets have mentioned that a lot of the work in recruitment is within their own ranks and certainly the example and exuding self-confidence that comes with accomplishment is something that's really attractive and is catching. And so this certainly adds to that.

But more importantly, I just wanted to congratulate you particularly for starting this program, leading it to this point, making it so successful. And certainly the administration that obviously had to have been extremely supportive of this and allowing that latitude doesn't always happen in all systems, and so for that, I'm very proud.

And in addition, I think your caution was well placed, because as you have such a supportive, and I really commend the leadership of this Committee and particularly the Chairman, our Madam Chairman of this Committee, for recognizing the need and helping to straighten out the issue that was a part of what you had to run into so quickly.

But I do also understand, having married a young soldier myself and a pilot at the time, and, yes, this is a very attractive uniform I might add, but there was a time though when the public sentiment isn't always as supportive. And so it's probably a good idea

for us to put some safeguards in there if it works well and appropriate.

And I thank you very much, Madam Chair, again, for your leadership on this. And thank you for what you do for our students and for Bethel community and for your service to our country as well. Thank you.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Thank you, ma'am.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Senator Boucher. That was very kind. Representative Molgano.

A VOICE: Over there.

REP. MOLGANO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to echo the words of Senator Boucher. Commander, I want to thank you personally for your years of service in the Navy on behalf of our nation. Thank you.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Thank you, sir.

REP. MOLGANO: And I also want to say thank you for what you're doing for these young people, because I think this is fantastic. And I wish all of you very well in your future of success and your future endeavors. Well, just to let you know, you have a small contingent in Stamford in the Army --

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Army officer.

REP. MOLGANO: -- the Army ROTC out of Westhill High School.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Right.

REP. MOLGANO: And we are very proud of them. They're always involved in the community, and they do a lot. And I wanted to say how proud I am of them, and I'm proud of you too. So thank you so much.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Thank you, sir. Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT: Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you all for your testimony and your time. Just a question regarding, and you might not know the numbers specifically, Lieutenant Commander, but how many people go on to the military, either enlisted or officer, or how many go on to at least post-secondary education? Do you know the percentages?

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Yes, sir, I do. I've been doing this for 11 years. There's been no increase in the military recruitment statistics from Bethel High School. There have been, however, an increase in the rates of students going on to four-year college programs and to service academies.

That has increased substantially, and that's been a lot of our focus. This year, we will have 24 students graduating from Bethel Navy Junior ROTC, eight of which will be going on to active duty or to college ROTC programs. So it's about one-third of the students go on to pursue the military.

And that's been statistically accurate for most of the years that we've been at, going at the program, including my own son who went into the United States Coast Guard after four years in the program.

REP. ACKERT: Great to hear. As an Air Force veteran, I was hoping to hear more Air Force, but thank you. Thank you for your testimony and for your time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Yes, sir. We've had two graduates in the United States Air Force Academy, so --

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. And as someone who comes from the New London area, go Coast Guard, so thank you for that as well.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Yes, ma'am.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Yeah. Thank you all very much. You've certainly enlightened us and educated us today.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK DWINELLS: Okay. Thank you. Okay. Off we go.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Now, I know they're a tough act to follow, but I think Senator Looney can do that, so, Senator Looney, the microphone is yours.

SENATOR LOONEY: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman and Distinguished Members of the Education Committee. My name is Martin Looney. I represent the 11th Senatorial District in New Haven and Hamden. And I'm here this afternoon to testify in support of Senate Bill 304, AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF LABOR HISTORY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

Organized labor, as we know it, has played a crucial role in American and in world history. However, very little of this historically vital role is taught to Connecticut students in our schools. And this is, I think, a real

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**EDUCATION  
PART 7  
2026 – 2366**

**2012**

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Representative.

Anything else?

Thank you very much.

SHERRI ZUMMO: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Dr. Linette Branham? Followed by Fred Balsamo and Carol Clifford.

LINETTE BRANHAM: Thank you. Good evening, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, members of the committee. Thank you, first of all, for hanging in here and --

A VOICE: (Inaudible.)

LINETTE BRANHAM: -- and being here this late to hear this late to hear from those of us who would like to comment to you.

I'm today to comment on Senate Bill 299 regarding the Junior ROTC program. Last year when Public Act 11-179 was passed, it has some very unintended consequences and some of you may remember that the -- the bottom line results of that ended up being that the State Department's interpretation of the law left our JROTC instructors uncertifiable or uncertified. It -- Public Act 11-179, basically, said that they did not have hold a certificate to teach, but then there were other consequences that followed and there were -- there were two serious ones.

One was that since they were teaching content area in many of the science areas, they were told they would have needed to get a regular teaching certificate and, also -- but the fact that they were told they didn't need to be certified to teach meant that they were eliminated automatically from the Teachers' Retirement

System where many of them had been participants for a number of years.

In stepped Commission Pryor in October and there was a short term administrative fix to that situation. Senator -- I'm sorry -- Commissioner Pryor used his authority to create a special JROTC certificate for our instructors who come from the military holding a valid military issue JROTC certificate. But we did agree that we needed to have a long-term fix.

Senate Bill 299 is very well intentioned in that it intends to do that, but there is what appears to be a minor matter of semantics, but technically is a very serious issue in that Senate Bill 299 would issue a permit to those who teach in the JROTC program.

In our system, a permit is different from a certificate. A permit is a temporary document that allows a person to teach for a specific period of time while they work on other requirements to meet full certification. A certificate is a document that says that the person has met all of the requirements for the certificate. Now if you hold a permit, you cannot be part of the Teachers Retirement System. You have to be a certified teacher in order to do that.

So Senate Bill 299 intends to certify, I believe, the JROTC instructors; however, it only issues a temporary document, and it would not allow them to continue to be part of Teachers' Retirement. And I don't believe that that's the intention of it. So it is -- it is a wording change in Senate Bill 299 that we really seek so that our JROTC teachers can have the full benefits and the full protection that every other certified teacher has.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much.

LINETTE BRANHAM: Thank you.



331  
cip/cd/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 5, 2012  
12:00 P.M.

SENATOR STILLMAN: And we appreciate you bringing that to our attention. That was not the intent. It was to --

LINETTE BRANHAM: I know it wasn't, yeah, yeah.

SENATOR STILLMAN: So thank you.

Questions?

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Just a brief question.

LINETTE BRANHAM: Uh-huh.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: I know that you have been in discussions with the State Department of Education

LINETTE BRANHAM: Yes.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: And I had the impression last autumn that the change that was made by the Commissioner actually addressed the concerns the CEA had. Are you still in discussions? Is there still a possibility of an administrative fix here, or are you persuaded that the only fix available to you is legislative?

LINETTE BRANHAM: The administrative fix that there is in place right now works. Our concern is this, if there is a change in leadership that administrative fix could be undone. And we really don't want to see that happen to our JROTC instructors.

I had an email probably about three or four weeks ago from the bureau chief at the department asking if this was still a concern of ours because they were concerned that we needed a more long-term solution. And so we -- we responded that, yes, we were pursuing this, and we do have recommended language that would indeed create a certificate on a permanent basis.

332  
cip/cd/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 5, 2012  
12:00 P.M.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Just to be clear, the bureau of certification does not drive the making of law in this state --

LINETTE BRANHAM: Correct.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: -- the Connecticut General Assembly does, but I appreciate your testimony.

LINETTE BRANHAM: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Any other questions?

Thank you very much.

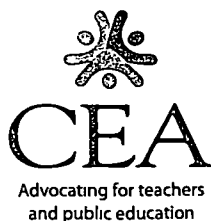
LINETTE BRANHAM: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Fred Balsamo? To be followed by Carol Clifford and Kia Levey.

FRED BALSAMO: Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann and the entire Education Committee, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I -- you have my written testimony and since it was going to begin with good afternoon, I think we'll suspend with the written part of it and I'm just going to hit you with the highlights for the sake of brevity and try and answer a couple of questions that were mentioned earlier.

I am here to support Bill 5354 and the portion of it that refers to the athletic director position. Currently, in the state of Connecticut, as far as that as well as the country, in every high school, in every middle school where there is an athletic program, the position of athletic director exists. Yet, in Connecticut, there is no definition of that position anywhere in the statutes. Legislation, recently, has significantly impacted that position. Law dictates coaches must have a permit; law dictates coaches must



**Connecticut Education  
Association**

**Governance**

Philip Apruzzese, President  
Sheila Cohen, Vice President  
Cheryl Prevost, Secretary  
Jeff Leake, Treasurer  
Kathy Flaherty, NEA Director  
Thomas Nicholas, NEA Director

**Executive Office**

Mary Loftus Levine  
Executive Director

**Policy & Professional Practice**

Dr Linette Branham, Director  
Capitol Place, Suite 500  
21 Oak Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-8001  
860-525-5641, 800-842-4316  
Fax 860-725-6328  
www.cea.org

Affiliated with the  
National Education Association

Remarks of Dr. Linette Branham  
Director, Policy & Professional Practice  
Connecticut Education Association

Before the Education Committee  
On Senate Bill 299  
AAC Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes

March 5, 2012

Good afternoon Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Linette Branham, and I'm the Director of Policy and Professional Practice at the Connecticut Education Association. I'm here to comment on Senate Bill 299 regarding the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) permit.

This bill states that the State Board of Education shall issue a *permit* to anyone who has been certified by the United States Armed Forces as an instructor or assistant instructor in a JROTC program, and that person may then be employed by a local school district to teach the courses in the JROTC program in that district.

When PA 11-179 was passed last year, it caused great confusion about what credentials JROTC instructors needed to have to teach in schools. The State Department of Education issued a memo to superintendents saying that JROTC instructors didn't need to be certified to teach in CT. However, if they taught content courses that students got credit for, such as in the sciences, the JROTC instructors would need to hold a regular CT

teaching certificate. This caused a number of problems. The new commissioner rectified the situation for the short term by creating and issuing a special JROTC certificate to those who hold a JROTC certificate issued by the US Armed Forces. A long-term solution through legislation needs to be put in place so that, despite changes in leadership in Connecticut, JROTC teachers have a stable structure through which they become certified to teach in CT.

Senate Bill 299, unfortunately, works against both the commissioner's short-term solution and what JROTC instructors need. In our certification system, a permit is different from a certificate. A *teaching permit* is a document that has a short-term validity period and allows a person to teach while working to meet the requirements for a certificate, but doesn't allow that person to be part of the teacher's retirement system. A *certificate* is a document that is issued to a person who has met all of the requirements set by the State Board of Education to teach a particular subject.

JROTC teachers need to hold a certificate issued by the State Board of Education so those who currently teach, and those who will teach in years to come, can be part of teacher's retirement. JROTC teachers make valuable contributions to the education of our students through the course content, leadership skill development, and community service components of the JROTC program. They participate in the activities of their school communities as all teachers do, and deserve recognition for this that comes through being members of the teacher's retirement system, as are other teachers.

I ask you, then, to replace the proposed language in Senate Bill 299 so that JROTC are issued a CT teaching *certificate*, not a *permit*, based on the

requirements and validity of the JROTC certificate issued by the United States Armed Forces.

Thank you for recognizing the value that our military personnel bring to our schools and students, and for your consideration of this matter.

did not show

BETHEL HIGH SCHOOL  
NAVAL JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS  
David W. Deakin Educational Park  
Bethel, Connecticut 06801  
(203) 794-8600 ext. 122

ESTABLISHED JULY 2002

UNIT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2003

NAVY DISTINGUISHED UNIT AWARD 2004 / 2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011

01 March 2012

From: Senior Naval Science Instructor, Bethel High School  
To: CT State Senator Michael McLachlan

Subj: JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION

Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the issue of JROTC Instructor Certification. I concur with the language you have offered in SB 299.

It is my belief that public education is the second line of National Defense, and whatever strengthens Public Education also serves to strengthen our state and our nation. In an effort to make Connecticut proactive in support of JROTC, I recommend the language in SB 299 be amended to include language regarding JROTC Instructor participation in the Teachers Retirement Board.

I also recommend expansion of the JROTC program in the state of Connecticut. Experienced ladies and gentlemen who are retired military Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers are pre-eminently qualified to lead by example and are mission oriented, the exact qualities needed to close the character gap and achievement gap in Connecticut's public schools.

Very Respectfully,

Mark Dwinells

LCDR Mark Dwinells USN (Ret)  
Senior Naval Science Instructor

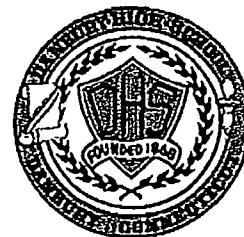
Cadet / CDR Madison Denny  
Battalion Commander

MSGT Joseph Meehan USMC (Ret)  
Naval Science Instructor



## AIR FORCE JUNIOR ROTC

Danbury High School  
43 Clapboard Ridge Road  
Danbury Connecticut 06810  
Tel: (203) 797-4847  
Fax: (203) 830-6599



March 2, 2012

State Senator Michael McLachlan  
Legislative Office Building  
Room 3400  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator McLachlan,

Thank you for the opportunity to make an input on the upcoming change to education legislation. I am unable to attend the hearing on Monday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, due to Connecticut Academic Performance Testing at Danbury High School that day, but my inputs follow.

### LEGISLATION AS PROPOSED:

AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 10-230a of the 2012 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage):

Notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 166 relating to professional certification, [a local or regional board of education may employ] the State Board of Education shall issue, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-145i, a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps permit to any person certified by the United States armed forces to be an instructor or assistant instructor of a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program. Any person holding such Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps permit may be employed by a local or regional board of education to serve as an instructor or assistant instructor of a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program in a school and to teach courses under such program in accordance with requirements established for such program by the United States Department of Defense.

### RECOMMENDED CHANGES:

1. Replace the word "permit" with "certificate." JUSTIFICATION: Teachers must hold a certificate to teach, not a permit, and all teaching regulations refer to teachers as "certified." Not being certified has been the main issue for JROTC instructors.
2. Replace "Board" in State Board of Education with "Department." JUSTIFICATION: The State Department of Education is the issuing authority for teacher certificates.
3. Add the following at the end of this section: "Additionally, the State Department of Education will count all previous JROTC instructor teaching time as full-time certified teaching time." JUSTIFICATION: Some JROTC instructors were not certified in the past, and the State Department of Education has not counted this teaching time at all, as if JROTC instructors were not professional teachers. The new JROTC teaching certificates (endorsement codes 210 and 310) are issued with only proof that the service (e.g., Air Force) has certified the instructor, which has always been a requirement to be a JROTC instructor. Therefore, JROTC instructors have met the current certification requirements all along, so they should be considered to have been certified teachers all along.

Sincerely,  
BRYAN D. HOLMES, Lt Col, USAF (Retired)  
Senior Aerospace Science Instructor



Testimony  
Bart Russell, Executive Director  
Connecticut Council of Small Towns  
Before the Education Committee  
March 5, 2012

Re: SB-300, An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) *supports the intent* of SB-300 but is concerned that the bill will impose another unfunded mandate on municipalities.

The state is currently in the planning process of creating a coordinated system of early childhood care and education by July of 2013. SB-300 outlines a plan to phase-in statewide access to school readiness for all eligible three and four-year olds.

COST appreciates that the bill recognizes the need for supporting access to pre-school programs for eligible students in *all* Connecticut towns and not just priority and competitive school districts. However, implementing school readiness programs involves huge costs associated with building, expanding and furnishing schools and classrooms, hiring qualified teachers, transporting students, developing curricula and purchasing supplies, etc. Therefore, we are concerned that if the state fails to fully fund the program, small towns and cities will be on the hook to pay for such state-mandated programs.

Although we certainly support the goal of providing students with access to early childhood programs, Connecticut's small towns and cities continue to face difficult budget years and are struggling to adopt budgets that will continue to provide core academic programs for K-12 students as well as comply with new curriculum standards and other mandates. We therefore urge lawmakers to carefully consider the costs of expanding access to school readiness programs and determine whether the state is in a position to commit to fully funding those costs.

In addition, we request that lawmakers take a hard look at reducing the number of unfunded mandates that drive up municipal education costs, including the Minimum Budget Requirement and binding arbitration. If mandate relief is addressed, districts may be successful in negotiating additional savings that could be targeted to strengthening academic programs.

Connecticut Council of Small Towns  
1245 Farmington Avenue, 101 West Hartford, CT 06107  
860-676-0770 860-676-2662 Fax





## State of Connecticut

### SENATE

STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

SENATOR MICHAEL A. McLACHLAN  
TWENTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
SUITE 3400  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06108-1591  
CAPITOL. (800) 842-1421  
E-MAIL [Michael.McLachlan@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Michael.McLachlan@cga.ct.gov)  
WEB SITE. [www.SenatorMcLachlan.cga.ct.gov](http://www.SenatorMcLachlan.cga.ct.gov)

March 5, 2012

ASSISTANT MINORITY LEADER

RANKING MEMBER  
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION &  
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and distinguished members of the Education Committee,

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan, and I am here today to speak in support of two bills before you: *House Bill 5357, An Act Concerning a Deaf Child Bill of Rights* and *Senate Bill 299, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes*.

House Bill 5357 would require that the individualized education program for a child who is deaf or hearing impaired to include a language and communication plan. This plan will address several important components, including the child's chosen primary language or communication mode, available peers and role models for that mode, educational options available for that student. Additionally, it will ensure qualifications of all teachers instructing that child, make all instruction and activities accessible to that child, and provide assistive devices and services when required.

It is important that regardless of a child's abilities we are providing them with options to succeed in their education. This bill does that. It provides a minimum of what our schools have to do in order to provide a base education for the deaf or hearing impaired. This base will allow every child to succeed in the same capacity as their peers. We are providing an even educational playing field for all.

Senate Bill 299 makes minor revisions to the education statutes relating to the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) instructors. It creates a credential and permit for the certification of JROTC instructors that creates permanence in the accreditation that will ensure that JROTC programs are thriving in Connecticut.

There are JROTC programs at both Danbury and Bethel High Schools. I have seen first hand the benefits that such a program can provide for the students in it. With these programs we have provided yet another unique educational experience for our students. I have a vested interest in assuring that our students continue to have all the education experiences that can be awarded to them.

I urge the committee to support both of these very important pieces of legislation in order to ensure that the students of Connecticut the best education that we can.

Thank you.

**H – 1147**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2012**

**VOL.55  
PART 25  
8215 - 8555**

mr/ch/rgd/gdm/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

406  
May 9, 2012

item be placed on the consent calendar.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question -- the motion is to put this bill on the -- item on the consent calendar.

Any objection? Any objection?

Hearing none, the item is placed on the consent calendar.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 501.

THE CLERK:

On page 26, Calendar 501, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 299, AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES, favorable report by the Committee on Appropriations.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Andrew Fleischmann, you have the floor, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on acceptance and passage in concurrence with the Senate.

mr/ch/rgd/gdm/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

407  
May 9, 2012

Will you remark?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is our annual minor revisions bill. It includes revisions that will allow endowed academies to receive school construction grants, as they always had in the past. It ensures that the City of Hartford will be able to operate a magnet school currently operated by CREC, as has been agreed to by both parties.

It expands membership of the special-education Head Start advisory councils and makes a number of important other minor changes to the education statutes.

Mr. Speaker, the bill is in possession of an amendment, LCO Number 4476, previously designated Senate "A." I ask that the Clerk please call and I be given permission to summarize.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The Clerk please call LCO 4476, previously designated Senate "A."

THE CLERK:

LCO 4476, Senate "A," offered by Representative Fleischmann and Senator Stillman.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Is there objection to summarization?

mr/ch/rgd/gdm/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

408  
May 9, 2012

Hearing none, please proceed, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Mr. Speaker, this amendment before us makes a number of additional minor changes and conforming changes to our education statutes.

I move adoption.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Question is on adoption.

Care to remark further? Care to remark further?

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 amendment is adopted.

Remark further on the bill as amended? Remark further?

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move that this item be placed on consent.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The motion is to place this item on consent.

Any objection?

Hearing none, the item is placed on the consent calendar.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 506.

THE CLERK:

On page 26, Calendar 506, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 347, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE'S OPEN SPACE PLAN, favorable report by the Committee on Appropriations.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Phil Miller, you have --

REP. P. J. MILLER (36th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on acceptance and passage in concurrence with the Senate.

Will you remark?

REP. P. J. MILLER (36th):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This bill seeks to update the State's open-space plan by increasing the frequency of revisions to every five

mr/ch/rgd/gdm/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

429  
May 9, 2012

calendar.

Representative Sharkey.

REP. SHARKEY (88th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker..

Mr. Speaker, I'm about to call the items again that are on the consent calendar, but I would like to alert the Clerk to two bills that we will be taking off the consent calendar. They are Calendars 380, and Calendars 431. Those are Calendars 380 and Calendar 431.

HB5333  
SB130

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 204.

THE CLERK:

On page 6, Calendar 204, Substitute for House Bill Number 530, AN ACT CONCERNING THE BOARD IN CONTROL OF THE CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION, favorable report by the Committee on Government Administration and Elections.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sharkey.

REP. SHARKEY (88th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With that, let me -- I was looking to just list the calendar numbers again that we are planning to put on the consent calendar before I move them. I'll be doing this

mr/ch/rgd/gdm/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

430  
May 9, 2012

in numerical order by calendar number.

They are Calendar Number 71, Calendar 204, Calendar 205, Calendar 287, Calendar 292, Calendar 330, Calendar 402, Calendar 407, Calendar 412, Calendar 417, Calendar 425, Calendar 426, Calendar 442, Calendar 458, Calendar 460.

Calendar 463, Calendar 492, Calendar 495, Calendar 499, Calendar 500, Calendar 501, Calendar 506, Calendar 507, Calendar 508, Calendar 512, Calendar 515, Calendar 516, Calendar 530, Calendar 538 and Calendar 545.

And I'd also like to add to that -- I'm sorry. I omitted one which is Calendar 275.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question before us is passage of the bills on today's consent calendar.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

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

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call.  
Members to the Chamber. The House is voting the consent calendar by roll call. Members to the Chamber, please.

HB5025  
HB5368  
HB5326  
HB5539  
HB5146  
SB328  
HB5534  
HB5555  
SB157  
SB232  
SB339  
SB340  
SB41  
SB98  
SB116  
SB196  
SB97  
SB188  
SB234  
SB237  
SB299  
SB347  
SB371  
SB391  
SB345  
SB383  
SB384  
SB29  
SB354  
HB5320  
SB254



mr/ch/rgd/gdm/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

431  
May 9, 2012

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 will please take a tally.

The Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

On today's consent calendar.

Total Number Voting	150
---------------------	-----

Necessary for Adoption	76
------------------------	----

Those Voting Yea	150
------------------	-----

Those Voting Nay	0
------------------	---

Those Absent and Not Voting	1
-----------------------------	---

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The consent calendar passes.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 443.

THE CLERK:

On page 20, Calendar 443, Senate Bill Number 60, AN ACT PROHIBITING PRICE GOUGING DURING SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS, favorable report by the Committee on the Judiciary.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

**S - 642**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2012**

**VOL. 55  
PART 7  
1961 - 2275**

cah/meb/gdm/rgd/tmj  
SENATE

30  
May 2, 2012

oversight by DPH with respect to water companies and the integrity of the water.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you Madam President. That's all the questions I have.

Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER:

Madam President, if -- if there's no objection may this bill please be added to the Consent Calendar?

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered sir.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 27, Calendar 288, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 299, AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES, favorable report of the Committees on Education and Appropriations.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Good afternoon, Madam President, you're looking well.

cah/meb/gdm/rgd/tmj  
SENATE

31  
May 2, 2012

THE CHAIR:

And you too, Ma'am.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you. Thank you.

I move the joint committee's favorable -- favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on passage of the bill.

Will you remark please?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

This is our annual minor revisions bill that comes out of the Education Committee. It is truly that, making some minor revisions to statutes around education. For -- so folks will know it addresses one really important issue that was brought to our attention by the RESCs in terms of allowing them to arrange for the criminal background checks of school personnel for those -- for them to retain those fingerprints and other identifying information for four years. That's because personnel go in and out in terms of projects within schools and so this is true cost saving measure.

It addresses some grants for youth service bureaus. It also allows the Department of -- of Education to administer the Even Start Family Literacy Program and it makes some other minor changes.

With that though I do have an amendment and if the Clerk would kindly call LCO Number 4476 and that I be allowed to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

cah/meb/gdm/rgd/tmj  
SENATE

32  
May 2, 2012

LCO Number 4476, Senate Amendment Schedule A, offered by  
Senator Sillman and Representative Fleischmann.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you.

I move adoption of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on adoption. Will you remark?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes thank you.

This is a -- an amendment to allow Three Rivers Community College to participate in a middle college program if one does come to fruition in the future. When the original language was passed several years ago, they were left out and so we want to correct that.

It also clarifies and brings up to current practice the duties of a medical advisor of a school. It also -- also corrects a statute in terms of age for students to be in school and with that I urge its adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you Madam President.

Madam President, I rise to support the amendment and, in fact, this bill has, at the end of the day, turned out to actually be minor revisions to the educational statutes and I think that the Chair has made sure and expertly crafted it so that it can easily pass today.

cah/meb/gdm/rgd/tmj  
SENATE

33  
May 2, 2012

Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

All in favor of Senate A, please say aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed?

I guess Senate A passes.

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you.

Madam President, I want to thank Senator Boucher for her kind remarks and her help in this Committee as ranking member. It's a pleasure to work with her.

If there isn't any objection, I'd like to ask to place this on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

Mr. Clerk -- sorry Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you -- thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, if the Clerk would call as the -- the next two items calendar page 1, Calendar 85, Senate Bill 43 and then calendar page 4, Calendar 205, Senate Bill 237. And

**S - 643**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2012**

**VOL. 55  
PART 8  
2276 - 2638**

cah/meb/gdm/rgd/tmj  
SENATE

232  
May 2, 2012

adopt OSHA's definition of cranes and it will extend the state regulations including operator licensing and training requirements to lifting capacities in a new category of between 2,000 and 10,000 pounds. However it will exempt those crane operators who are operating in that new category, 2,000 to 10,000 if they qualify under one of three circumstances.

The first being by -- if they are certified or accredited by an audited employer program, or if they are certified under the U.S. military, or if they have satisfied an accredited crane operating testing process through such an organization, or then of course if they are -- they have a license under state law.

The bill will require that such operators be retested in a cycle of every four years and it also adopts the OSHA's governance for hoisting equipment on the apprenticeship level. It also increases, in accordance with OSHA, from 1,000 to 3,000, the civil fine for any violations.

And then there are many technical changes in the strike-all amendment which also help us to conform and bring us into conformity with OSHA's new regulation.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Suzio.

SENATOR SUZIO:

Thank you, Madam President.

I rise to support the amendment and to thank Senator Hartley for her leadership and willingness to work with the small-business operators in Connecticut.

Also I'll compliment that the Department of Administrative Services for their working with the various folks affected by this. And I think we have a much more workable bill and want to extend my thanks to the good Senator and express my strong support for the amendment.