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SB0382

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**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**HIGHER EDUCATION
AND
EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT
PART 3
736 - 1104**

2012

SENATOR BYE: Now we are moving on to our -- the general public list. We will start with Dr. Linette Branham. I hope I'm saying that right. Doctor, welcome.

LINETTE BRANHAM: Good afternoon Senator Bye and Representative Willis and members of the Committee. I'm Linette Branham. I'm the director of Policy and Professional Practice at the Connecticut Education Association, and I'd like to comment briefly on two bills, Senate Bill 382 and Senate Bill 384.

Senate Bill 382 is rather brief, and our assumption of that bill is that it aims to assure that early childhood educators have appropriate certification and preparation and that special educators also are -- work with, I should say, kindergarteners.

The bill states that as of July 1st, if it's passed this year -- as of July 1st, certificates, elementary certificates, will be valid for grades one through six. There's an unintended consequence, we believe, to this in that that would strip, basically, kindergarten from every currently valid elementary certificate, meaning that those teachers who currently teach kindergarten under that certification would not be able to do so come September.

We ran into this same type of situation a number of years ago and it really created a lot of chaos. Part of the problem is that we don't have enough people coming into early childhood education itself as a field. So it's an unintended consequence that we just wanted to make you aware of. The overall goal of the bill, however, we do support.

Bill 384 aims to do two things, and that is, one -- the first one is that it would require a student teaching experience to begin in the first year that a teacher, a pre-service teacher, is in the teacher preparation program and continue throughout that teacher prep program, and we really strongly support that. Students now have a variety of field experiences before their student teaching experience, but they can vary from one university to another.

It also states that students must be given information about shortage areas, both geographic and subject area in their first year of the preparation program. That is also very well-intentioned but I think it's a little bit late. By the time that a student gets into a teacher preparation program, chances are that that student has done the majority of his or her course work in the subject area major that they have. So it's really late for that student to pursue another subject area.

There are a lot of ways in which this could, you know, be changed and -- and this could be worked out so that students get information a lot earlier, before they make the decision to come into the profession. Because of that, we have strong reservations about both of those bills, and we do ask that you withhold full support until some of these issues are resolved so that we don't have unintended consequences in the long run.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you very much for your testimony, and you make an excellent point

about the early childhood bill, Senate Bill 382. And that seems like an -- a reasonable accommodation that people who have -- currently have the certificate, the (inaudible) K to 6, maintain those certificates to teach K to six. I think that's what you're asking. Is that accurate?

LINETTE BRANHAM: Yeah, that's true. But also the fact that we don't have enough students currently in our early childhood program, and it takes the universities a bit of time, you know, to ramp up and change any program.

SENATOR BYE: Uh-huh.

LINETTE BRANHAM: So if that -- even if that bill was to become effective July 1 and grandfather in all current holders, we could still run the risk of having too large of a gap for a period of time.

We really need to encourage students, who really want to teach kindergarten and first grade, especially, or kindergarten and pre-K to go into early childhood education. But because we have overlap in our certificates, it's understandable that they go for the certificate that gives them the greatest latitude and, hence, the greatest opportunity to get a job. So we've got a real problem here. I don't know if that's something that you want to --

SENATOR BYE: Yeah.

LINETTE BRANHAM: -- recommend to the commissioner's new Educator Preparation Advisory Council to take a look at, but that might be one avenue.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

LINETTE BRANHAM: Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: And -- and I think that you get the intent and --

LINETTE BRANHAM: Oh, absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: -- it, basically, when they changed this a number of years ago they destroyed the early childhood ed program that are --

LINETTE BRANHAM: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: -- state universities -- and they closed programs --

LINETTE BRANHAM: Absolutely.

SENATOR BYE: -- so now you're right. It will take some time to adjust, so I appreciate your input.

Senator Boucher, did you have questions?

SENATOR BOUCHER: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chairman. And thank you for --

LINETTE BRANHAM: You're welcome.

SENATOR BOUCHER: -- appearing before us and adding your perspective on this topic that has occupied some of us for a while in -- in trying to think about how we can better improve classroom teaching and outcomes, given so much attention and discussion this year on education reform.

One of the things that I found in working with so many different towns, and many of them with outstanding school systems and others that are

SB389
SB384

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LINETTE BRANHAM: Uh-huh.

SENATOR BOUCHER: -- working to develop and become better, is the interesting feedback I get on the part of staff responsible for the hiring and -- and evaluation of -- of new teachers and superintendents as well as -- the -- the concern that I found was that there seems to be a lack of consistency between the various programs and -- and the students that -- that are ultimately become the teachers in their classroom.

This -- although there were some that were highly regarded -- and took a look at some of those who were highly regarded and two of the things that seem to come out at you was that -- had very high hurdles for acceptance. In other words, their qualifications were quite high to get into their programs and also spending the kind of quality time actually doing the work of teaching. And so -- since, though, however, we contemplated looking at drawing up some language that might be heard such as today. I've since learned that the Department of Education, almost at the same time, seems to be coming to the same conclusion. And as you just mentioned, they've put together a committee, an Education Preparation Advisory Council --

LINETTE BRANHAM: Right.

SENATOR BOUCHER: -- with -- combining both of the Department of Education and the Board of Regents as well, which is a great way to do it, and it appears that they are going to be looking at a lot of the issues that we're looking at in this bill with hopes of coming

SUSAN PALISANO: Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: Next is Maggie Adair from the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance.

MAGGIE ADAIR: Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Willis, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. I'm Maggie Adair. I'm the executive director at the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance.

The Alliance is a statewide advocacy and membership organization committed to improving the developmental outcomes of children, all children, birth to eight in areas of early learning, health, safety and economic security.

I'm here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 382 AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER

CERTIFICATION. This bill changes the current endorsement to teach elementary education from grades -- from kindergarten through six to grades one through six. One outcome of this change would be the positive impact that it would have on the early childhood workforce and the gap that we, as a state, face to -- face to place highly qualified teachers in our publicly funded early childhood programs.

Several years ago, state regulations changed the elementary endorsement to include kindergarten. The change resulted in compromising the Integrated Early Childhood/Special Education Nursery through Grade Three Endorsement. I would actually suggest that this be changed to be a three to three title as -- as -- from the current, kind of, outdated, outmoded title.

Students who may have chosen the stronger and more comprehensive early childhood preparation instead were counseled and in -- subsequently opted to receive the K through six elementary education, as this would also allow them to teach K through three. This change in policy marginalized the early childhood degree programs. And today the amount of students graduating with a nursery through grade three endorsement are significantly reduced, as well as the existing programs are reduced.

We now have too many teachers, as CA has said, who are -- have -- certified in elementary education and too few who are certified in early childhood education. Teachers of young children benefit from a strong knowledge base in child development and developmentally appropriate practice. And this content is best found in specialized early childhood preparation programs.

Teachers graduating with this degree are prepared to teach young children who learn very differently than a -- a -- child in grades four through six. It is critical that we put teachers in classrooms with young children who understand fundamental concepts such as executive functioning and early language literacy, which will help to ensure that all children are ready for kindergarten and are reading at grade level by grade three.

Preparing teachers K through six waters down this specialized knowledge base as the focus of the content becomes broader and more about curriculum and instruction.

Finally, this bill strengthens the argument for pay parity between pre-K and kindergarten teachers. In Connecticut, the average pay for

a kindergarten teacher is about \$60,000. The average wage for a pre-K teacher in a state-funded program is about \$31,000.

Pay for the early childhood workforce is the elephant in the room. Quality and compensation go hand-in-hand. If Connecticut is serious about closing the achievement gap, and we know that we need to start in the earliest years. We need to get serious about address -- addressing pay period in the early childhood workforce. We need to do this for the sake of our children.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you -- thank you, Maggie. I know you were fortunate enough to be with me at the early childhood forum that the Connecticut Mirror put on last week. And I think every speaker took Lynn Kagan, who's a -- a national researcher, term of "schoolification" of early childhood education and the hazard of that for long-term outcomes for kids because, while you may be hammering in literacy, children are not having time to learn self-regulation and those attitudinal things and self-control that ultimately make them able to sit later when their brains are really primed for learning reading.

Can you talk about that just briefly about why do we need this? Why -- why shouldn't we have someone who student teaches in fourth grade teaching preschool?

MAGGIE ADAIR: I think it's very important that -- what Lynn Kagan said -- she's a national early childhood expert, very widely recognized and respected -- is that there is a reason why we have a birth to eight system. What -- what --

it's not arbitrary around third grade.

Science, the brain research, psychologists, all show that once a child -- it -- at grade three -- at age eight learns differently. Children when they're early -- they -- they learn in circles. That's why they want to be read books -- the same book again and again and again. A child who's in fourth grade says I read that book, I want to go to a new book. So that we need to understand that there is -- this is not an arbitrary thing around how children learn.

So to expect a sixth grade teacher who's teaching a child who is -- thought is his -- who learns very differently than a child who's in pre-K, kindergarten, first grade, who's needs -- who's learning in a very, very different way, the teacher has to be very in tune with the developmentally appropriate practice when you're working with these children. And I think that, you know, the debate around play verses academics is somewhat raging in Connecticut until -- some -- around some recent news articles about the fact that, in some kindergarten classes, there's literally no play in place, and that this concept of an executive function is so important about how these children need to learn self-regulation on their own so that they are ready to learn when they're first in second grade and third grade.

To expect young children, particularly boys, to be sitting hours on end and not engaging in play, they are not going to learn. It -- it was interesting, I read a letter to the editor this morning around this whole thing about the play verses academics and being ready is like -- it's akin to asking your one-in-a-half year

old pushing them to learn how to walk faster. That -- that child is going to walk when that child is ready to walk.

SENATOR BYE: Yes. And you probably need to expose them to some gross motor experience to help them get ready to walk.

MAGGIE ADAIR: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: But training them in walking is not going to make them a better walker --

MAGGIE ADAIR: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: -- in the long run. Right?

MAGGIE ADAIR: Right.

SENATOR BYE: It's sort of, like, the analogy is that the mirror (inaudible) the hasty farmer. You know, they want -- they want everything to grow fast and they plant it quickly and they do all the things they are supposed to do really fast but without the fertile soil it's not going to bear any fruit, I think is the analogy used there. That you need to spend time building -- building the soil.

MAGGIE ADAIR: See, I think CA -- CEA made some very good points around the grandfathering.

SENATOR BYE: Agreed.

MAGGIE ADAIR: The language doesn't have it and that I -- I assume that, of course, that grandfathering would take place. That would be incredibly -- a negative impact on the current teachers or the current teachers actually who are in the pipeline. And also, I do agree also that -- 2012 or 2013, there's

going to be -- need some time to ramp up the existing nursery through grade three, or we could call it the three to three degree program because that would take some time. But, it does exist so it's not that it disappeared, it's just that, as you said, that students were opted into the K through twelve

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SENATOR BYE: Yeah.

MAGGIE ADAIR: -- K through six.

SENATOR BYE: Yeah. And I appreciate that. And -- and you keep talking about this idea of three to three. Is that part of some national movement or what -- what is this idea --

MAGGIE ADAIR: That is part of a --

SENATOR BYE: -- you -- you keep saying three to three.

MAGGIE ADAIR: -- part of a national movement and it is -- it's focusing on -- that the need for alignment from pre-K to grade three, and the fact that -- not pushing down kindergarten academics but, you know, appropriate instruction at the pre-K level, and there's a continuum of how a child learns.

There's actually a group here in Connecticut that went to Harvard two years ago, I believe, and they actually call themselves the three to three group, and they are working on these -- this alignment, and -- and -- and particularly connecting preschool programs that are not in elementary schools -- in the public school systems who are in community-based programs, the need to have that alignment as that child is transitioning into kindergarten.

It's so important to have that -- the relationship going back and forth between those pre-K programs and the kindergarten programs. And it takes place in some communities and it's working wonderfully in some communities, where the K to -- the kindergarten teacher is going with the preschool classroom to visit, the preschool teachers is going to the kindergarten. If there's professional development, they open it up to the preschool classroom because they don't have the same resources. And that -- that's needed. It -- it -- it's very, very important what's going on.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you. And -- and my experience in early childhood certainly shows to me that there is a lot more pushing down going on than pushing up of curriculum. And -- and I met last week -- I asked the UConn Human Development and Family Studies to come down and the Neag School because I think this total disconnection between early childhood and elementary really is part of why we are losing kids and we are not closing the gap in a way that we would hope we could.

And in a lot of colleges, particularly since we changed this regulation, the early childhood majors have just, sort of, disappeared. And so now you have more push down than ever because everyone's getting trained in K to six. It used to be -- I know when I taught at Saint Joseph's College, a real balance. You had some early childhood people and some one to six people, and the overlap was important. And now it seems like the groups have -- have gone into entirely different camps.

And so what you talked about rarely happens. It does happen that preschool teachers are told, oh, you should go see what second grade is like, but second grade teachers don't spend a lot of time in preschool. It just has to do, I think, with the weight -- the relative weight of the two groups.

MAGGIE ADAIR: And -- and I think we just need to go to the brain research, which was not really here 20 or 25 years ago.

SENATOR BYE: Right.

MAGGIE ADAIR: I mean, it -- and it has grown exponentially in the last decade or so. The -- it's -- research is there, and it shows how children learn. And the -- in critical importance to starting at birth before they are entering pre-K, the zero to three years are so important but also how these children are going to thrive in a pre-K program.

SENATOR BYE: Right. And I was just also -- one other thing I direct committee members to is the Harvard Center for the Developing Child, where -- where Jack Shonkoff is doing a lot of work to show that if you don't take on the social and emotional development, you'll never get to the cognitive development. That starts with kids feeling secure and attached and not in chaos. So I thank you for your testimony. Other committee members?

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I'm just trying to -- I guess I understand the -- the crest of this and -- and where we're going with it. My daughters a K-six -- now in certification practices, seventh and eighth

also. So -- but are we -- are our higher eds ready for -- if -- in this change, are they prepared for this?

I guess that is where my concern is. I, you know, obviously, we made a change and it went back, and a lot of people maybe have changed their courses. And are they aligned to possibly be prepared as of July 1 change for this year?

So do you think that it's not going to be, you know -- forgetting, you know -- you know, teachers and -- and would -- would it be a baccalaureate degree? Would it be an associates for an early childhood?

If you could help me with that, that would be great.

MAGGIE ADAIR: Yes. So let me clarify. So there are two certifications right now, as it stands, k through six and I think it's one -- one -- 013. And then there is this nursery to grade three, which is 113. It exists. And it actually exists right now. It exists at Eastern Connecticut State University as an undergrad or a grad; Mitchell college as an undergrad; Saint Joseph's as an undergrad or grad; Southern, undergrad or grad; and University of Hartford. So, it's in place; it's just that they have been reduced. And then in other colleges, they actually closed them because of enrollment.

So, yes, you would need a ramp up. And I think -- I agree with CEA that -- of it -- this year we probably -- it's a little tight, so that we have to think about -- you know, as all bills, they're a work in progress. And you can fix them and re-think about a

timeline. So it's not creating a brand new curriculum.

REP. ACKERT: Thank you. And that was my -- my concern and so it -- it's a work in progress and it's great. And thank you for your testimony.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR BYE: That was very helpful. Thank you for that question, Representative Ackert.

Other questions?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Madam Chairman. And thank you so much for your testimony, I think this afternoon's discussions have been incredibly important and very relevant, however the last two things -- comments you just made sort of highlighted, I believe the CA's concern when I asked them, you know: would you prefer that you sliced and diced the certification process to be more specialized and to more address that age group, and the response was: well you know, the vagaries of the market place could be very problematic for a teacher because if the demographics shift, you have so many fewer and all of a sudden the enrollment, as you said -- enrollment is reduced to such a point then they don't want to lose their practice teaching. They would want to have some flexibility and moving between the grade levels and it -- it sounds to me as if that -- if doing so, it almost would require a little refresher course maybe in that different -- the different needs of -- of the actual student, that child, if they were to have to do that as well. Do you have

any thoughts on that?

MAGGIE ADAIR: Yes, well -- so -- and at first I'm going to say I am by no -- no means an expert around certifications. Let's lay that out quickly. And I think it is complicated.

My first point is why we think this still is important because it's not about the system, it's not about the teachers, it's not about the superintendent, this is about the child. And we need the best outcomes for children we can, and we know about teaching developmentally appropriate practice if we are going to close this achievement gap.

Now, on the practical side, I understand these concerns. I think we need to think in terms of -- that pre-K through three is a spread, of some sort, for teachers to choose. I was intrigued by what CA said about some kind of cross endorsement. Maybe something could be -- we could work in alignment with that.

I know that the change occurred a few years ago because superintendents wanted that ability to be able to move teachers around. It wasn't just about teachers having the choice in the marketplace, which I understand, that is an issue, but also wanting to move students around. And my first reaction was, yeah, but do we really want a sixth grade teacher going into a kindergarten program, and we don't.

On the other hand, if you're look -- I fear I'm just going to open up Pandora's Box -- when you're thinking about tiny, tiny communities and we have one superintendent and one principal, they don't have that latitude to move around as much. But there's a whole

other argument that there should be collaborations between three, four, five communities so that you could actually shift teachers from community to community. I mean, that's a whole other picture that really needs to be addressed long term, because it's rather silly to think that we have such tiny, tiny communities then -- and then they don't have that latitude to be creative and innovative and -- but that's another -- a conversation for another day.

So I think this is complicated, I think it needs some discussion. I think it needs some thinking through as far as maybe a cross endorsement. I still am going to go back to the child though, and this model works best for young children. And I think that is what we need to really ground our policy in, what is going to work best for the child?

SENATOR BYE: Thank you. Other questions?

Thank you for your testimony today, Maggie, and for -- I know it's not your specialty area but I know it's been coming up a lot with the early childhood alliance --

MAGGIE ADAIR: Well, I've been --

SENATOR BYE: -- as it concerns --

MAGGIE ADAIR: -- listening to many experts and talking with many, many people, so I'm actually bringing the views not of -- of just myself but many people in the alliance who have expertise and they just didn't have time to get up here today.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. Super.

MAGGIE ADAIR: Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: Next is Dr. Paige Bray from the Early Childhood Higher Ed Alliance -- oh, good. Be able to answer some of our questions, and thank you so much for coming up here and testifying today.

PAIGE BRAY: Good afternoon, Chairman Bye and Willis and committee. I have many thoughts so -- especially as the conversation has expanded, and I thank Maggie for going first. I think she just did wonderful heavy lifting.

But I wanted to tell you that I am a professor of early childhood at University of Hartford. I have had the honor of continuing a long legacy of early childhood preparation there. We are a program that has been -- was marginalized, in part, by the decisions that have been made in the past but have -- stand strong and continued to be committed to early childhood.

I'm also the cochair for the early childhood higher education committee, which is a group of all of those faculty members who have remained standing in both associate degree programs and four year programs, so I speak with some perspective on that group as well.

I also come to you as a person who has been dedicated to family and children my entire career, which included time in the classroom in very diverse settings, urban, non-urban settings, and I want to speak specifically to the Bill 382.

Kindergarten is children -- are -- is the child's first experience or at least a bridge experience into what we understand to be

formal schooling. It's a very critical time. Anyone who has a kindergarten age child close to them understands what -- how big that transition is, both for the child and for the parent.

What early childhood people do, people prepared in the early childhood certification, is understand how to work with children and their families, how to work with the parents who are going to continue to support children and set those foundations for children across their career as students and out into the workforce.

As early childhood educators, we pay attention to the whole person, which means we focus on literacy and the language development across -- across the early childhood span for -- through age eight, and what that looks -- what that can mean for the third grade literacy test. But we also focus on executive function. We also focus on the social, emotional learning and we understand the connections between home and school. That's part of the content that early childhood educators are prepared to -- to address.

In my experience with the workforce, I want to just say that most people know, most typically women, but most young adults know that they are interested in early childhood, especially in these current times. They're very concerned about their employment opportunities. So part of what -- bringing the kindergarten into early childhood certification only will do for us is let the people who know that's the age they are committed to really focus on it and not feel like they have to also move over to that elementary content for the sake of employment

opportunity. So I think it -- this is a way we can honor the choices of the people who really want to work with young children.

In my experience with associate programs moving to bachelors, and people who have been working in private pre-K, seeking their certification at the graduate level, these are people who have field-tested, if you will, their early childhood experience, and so they are people who, I think, have a clear commitment to that work and what it means to work with those children and their families.

Last but not least, I just want to say I think we have the opportunity here to focus on early childhood practice in schools. That means our young children will move out into be contributing adults in ways of -- about critical thinking and collaboration, and all those things that once, about ten years ago, we had a poster that said everything I needed to learn I learned in kindergarten. We could get back to a few of those principals. So thank you very much for hearing my testimony today.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you for coming before us. Now, can you -- I don't know how long you have been at U-Hart, but could you give us some historical perspective about what happened? Because, you know, I was working at Saint Joseph College when this changed --

PAIGE BRAY: Yeah.

SENATOR BYE: -- and it seemed all of a sudden, and it changed our program entirely over the course of a month.

PAIGE BRAY: Uh-huh.

SENATOR BYE: -- so I don't -- but I -- I wasn't involved in public policy around it at that time and I didn't know if you were and if you --

PAIGE BRAY: Right. It was a little bit before my time. I was actually in Massachusetts at that point.

SENATOR BYE: Okay.

PAIGE BRAY: I've been at the University of Hartford for four years. We -- I replaced Regina Miller, who's here, who was at the university for 30 -- 2 or 3 years, I believe, before that. I can just speak to practically what I have seen, which is that, in the face of kindergarten moving to also be part of the elementary, students are concerned that they won't be as marketable. That the principal will defer and hire the person who had -- they can put in more grades versus hire the person who has the content knowledge related to the young child.

And I think that the importance there is that, I feel, having been a marginalized program, I send my students out to be marginalized somewhat as professionals, because they do advocate for children and they do talk about working with families, and that's part of the priority. And so this, I think, would create a school-based strength for that sort of practice.

But I really hear -- and this is related to my research -- I really hear parents struggling with what the kindergarten experience is for their children in kindergarten and -- and how do they make sense of, this is where I know my

child is at, this is where I want my child to be, but this thing that is being asked of them, whether it's sitting still six hours, whether it's very fine motor paper-based work and very narrow educational experience, it's not sitting well for them.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. That's helpful and just sort of a follow up on that question. Do you -- you heard Maggie say --

PAIGE BRAY: Uh-huh.

SENATOR BYE: -- if we're talking about the interest of the child and the long-term interest of the child --

PAIGE BRAY: Uh-huh.

SENATOR BYE: -- what's the difference between this preschool to grade three, and then one to grade six, and the K to grade six certification? How do you see it advantaging our children?

PAIGE BRAY: Our children? Oh, no -- well -- I can speak to that -- that -- the advantage -- and this what I was alluding to in terms of some parent related research I've been engaged in -- it would enable kindergarten to meet the needs of the child and the family as that first experience or as that bridge experience, as people come -- as children come out of pre-K into the big -- into the more typical school, and that I think this would enable the people who are best positioned, by content and by field experience, to meet those needs.

One of the things that came up was an issue of a cross endorsement. And while I would like to see cross endorsements be an opportunity

for teachers to expand their professional ground, the early childhood people are the people who are having experiences with that age child from -- at the University of Hartford, from their first year as undergraduates, or who are coming from that field and -- and fine-tuning their skills.

So I think that idea of people who are -- not only have set course work about the work but are actually in the field and done the work, it -- and had those apprentice like experiences, is really a powerful experience for the children then to have that person in front of them.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. Do you have any -- this is a little off subject, but since we have you here, do you have any ideas about how this committee -- I've begun conversations with higher ed institutions --

PAIGE BRAY: Uh-huh.

SENATOR BYE: -- how this committee could work to breakdown the barriers that exist between early childhood programs and elementary programs, so that the practice will reflect a three-year old to third grade continuum that gets that birth to age eight, while the, you know, brain and development --

PAIGE BRAY: Uh-huh.

SENATOR BYE: -- is proceeding --

PAIGE BRAY: Uh-huh.

SENATOR BYE: -- in a way that's different than later elementary?

PAIGE BRAY: I think, from an academic perspective, we actually don't have a lot of disagreement. I think it becomes a practical expression of our accreditation and programs, and those are the silos that get created. So if we speak about brain research or we speak about academic topics, we have a lot of common ground. Even around understanding of -- of pedagogy and what that might look like, let's say, for the early literacy learner as then they emerge to later in the grade.

So I think the focus on the current research that, in many ways, supports previous research around three to three, which Maggie addressed, and how that then quality experiences at that age with people who know what to do with that age supports the learning for the -- the teachers who are then going out to work in -- at in elementary.

So I think if we can move a little -- just create little spaces between the silos and understand all of us doing our best work means all of us will be able to produce stronger candidates, both in teacher education and then high-quality teachers obviously affecting the students -- the children themselves.

I did also want to say something about the workforce, if I may, which is just that I -- there were a number of early childhood programs that were cut. But there are a number that still exist at the undergrad and grad level, and with strong associate programs feeding bachelor level programs as well.

So, while clearly, I had assumed there would be some language about grandfathering current people in positions, currently gotten positions or the pipeline, there is definitely

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jr/gdm/gbr

HIGHER EDUCATION AND
EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

1:00 P.M.

capacity that can be expanded to meet this need. It's not as though that everyone disappeared.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. Well -- well that's very helpful. Thank you.

PAIGE BRAY: Uh-huh.

SENATOR BYE: Other questions?

Thank you very much.

PAIGE BRAY: Sure. Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: -- for your testimony today.

That concludes our list of people signed up. Is there anyone else who would like to testify? Would anybody else like to testify today?

And if not, if nobody else would like to testify, then I call this hearing closed. Thank you.



Connecticut
Early Childhood
Alliance

Testimony before the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
Re: S.B. 382 – An Act Concerning Teacher Certification
Submitted by Maggie Adair, Executive Director
Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance
Tuesday, March 13, 2012

Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Willis, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. I am Maggie Adair, Executive Director of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance (Alliance). The Alliance is a statewide advocacy and membership organization committed to improving outcomes for all children, birth to age eight, in the areas of early learning, health, safety, and economic security.

I am here today to testify in support of S.B. 382 – *An Act Concerning Teacher Certification*. This bill changes the current endorsement to teach elementary education grades from Kindergarten through 6 to Grades 1 through 6. One outcome of this change would be the resulting positive impact that it would have on the early childhood workforce and the gap we, as a state, face to place highly qualified teachers in our publicly funded early childhood classroom.

Several years ago, state regulations changed the elementary endorsement to include kindergarten. This change resulted in compromising the *Integrated Early Childhood /Special Education Nursery through Grade 3 Endorsement (113)*. Students, who may have chosen the stronger and more comprehensive early childhood preparation, instead were counseled to, and subsequently opted to, receive the K-6 elementary degree (013), as this also allows them to teach grades K-3. This change in policy marginalized the early childhood degree programs, and today the amount of students graduating with the Nursery through Grade 3 endorsement are significantly reduced, as well as the existence of these program . We now have too many teachers certified in elementary education and too few certified in early childhood education.

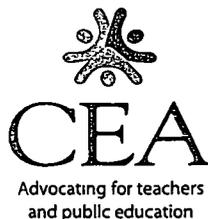
Teachers of young children benefit from a strong knowledge base in child development and developmentally appropriate practice, and this content is best found in specialized early childhood preparation programs. Teachers graduating with this degree are prepared to teach young children, who learn very differently than a child in grades 4-6. It is critical that we put teachers in classrooms with young children who understand fundamental concepts like executive functioning and early language literacy, which will help to ensure that a child is ready to enter kindergarten, and able to read at grade level by grade 3. Preparing teachers K through 6, waters down this specialized knowledge base, as the focus of the content becomes broader and more about curriculum and instruction.

Finally, this bill strengthens the argument for pay parity between pre-k teachers and kindergarten teachers. In Connecticut, the average wage of a kindergarten teacher is about \$60,000; the average wage for a pre-k teacher in a state-funded program is \$31,000. Pay for the early childhood workforce is the elephant in the room. Quality and compensation go hand in hand. If Connecticut is serious about closing the achievement gap, and we know that we need to start in the earliest years, we need to get serious about address pay parity in the early childhood workforce. We need to for the sake of our children.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify.

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Before the Committee on Higher Education and Employment
Advancement
On Senate Bill 382, An Act Concerning Teacher Certification
&
On Senate Bill 384, An Act Concerning Teacher Preparation

March 13, 2012

Good afternoon Senator Bye and Representative Willis, and members of the Committee.

My name is Linette Branham, I'm the Director of Policy and Professional Practice for the Connecticut Education Association, and I'd like to comment on Senate Bill 382 regarding elementary certification for teachers and Senate Bill 384 regarding teacher preparation.

Without knowing the history and rationale for the proposed bill, it's difficult to grasp exactly what the goal of the bill is. We know that it would do two things: (1) eliminate kindergarten from the current elementary certificate, and (2) include kindergarten as a grade in the comprehensive special education certificate. My assumption is that the proposal's focus is on assuring that kindergarten teachers are better prepared to teach special education students. If that assumption is correct, then in order to teach kindergarten under this bill, a teacher would have to hold an early childhood certificate, which is based on a preparation program that prepares the teacher to teach in either a regular or special education classroom at the primary level.

That, in itself, is a laudable goal.....if special education needs of students are identified and addressed in the classroom at an earlier age, by teachers who are well prepared to do so, students benefit greatly. However, the bill has a major impact that may well not have been anticipated by those drafting the language.

The bill states that, beginning this July 1, all elementary endorsements will be valid for teaching grades one through six. If passed, this legislation would, essentially, eliminate the validity of teaching kindergarten that is now part of the elementary certificate. It would prevent the thousands of teachers who currently hold a K-6 certificate from being eligible to teach kindergarten in the fall of 2012. Connecticut had this problem occur previously, when kindergarten was removed from the elementary certificate and superintendents had to search for teachers who held the early childhood certificate to fill those positions. The result was a year of anxiety until kindergarten was restored to the certificate through the legislative process. While this is probably not the intention of Senate Bill 382, this could easily happen.

Another potential problem lies in the area of teacher preparation.

Eliminating kindergarten from the elementary certificate doesn't give higher education institutions the time they need to either design and seek approval for a program to certify early childhood educators, or expand their current programs to handle what may be the increased number of students who would apply to the programs so they could earn the early childhood certificate. Again, Connecticut could be left with a

period of at least a few years when we don't have enough qualified teachers to teach in one of the most important grade levels.

There are two sections of Senate Bill 384 CEA supports and urges you to pursue. The first is that students be required to have student teaching experiences beginning in their first year of the teacher preparation program. Students are currently required by most, if not all university programs, to have field experiences prior to student teaching, but the nature of these can vary from one university's preparation program to another. We encourage a requirement for universities to have a more common approach to what constitutes either 'field experiences' or 'early student teaching' so there is more consistency in what students in different programs receive.

CEA also supports the practice of teacher preparation programs providing information about subject and geographic teaching shortage areas to students. However, by the time students are in the preparation program, most of them have already completed the subject area course requirements for their degree, and the subject may not be one of those that is a subject area shortage. Where teachers are needed – as it pertains to both subject area and geographic area – needs to reach the hands of our students while they are in high school, and then continue to be reinforced when they first enter college. While we're not looking to create more requirements for high school guidance counselors to fill, we would encourage you to create more incentives that would move universities and school districts to work even more closely together to inform students of the need for teachers.

With this in mind, we encourage you to withhold support for both Senate bill 382 and 384 until other possible ways to achieve the goals of these

bills are explored. Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective with you.

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Those voting Yea	132
Those voting Nay	4
Those absent and not voting	15

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

The bill, as amended, passes.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 451?

THE CLERK:

On page 26, Calendar 451, Substitute for Senate
Bill Number 382, AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER

CERTIFICATION, favorable report by the Committee on
Education.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

The good Representative Willis.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you for saying I
was good.

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

The question is acceptance of the joint
committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in
concurrence with the Senate.

Will you remark?

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Representative Willis.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

This bill changes the current endorsement to teach elementary school grades K through six to grades one through six. It also creates a pre-K through three -- grade three certificate.

This would enable a -- there to be a childhood -- early childhood certification that would include pre-K through three. This is -- addresses the need for an early childhood educators. The present configuration has resulted in too many ele -- elementary school teachers and not enough early childhood.

Madam, I have an amendment, the Clerk has an amendment, LCO 3841. I move that the reading of the amendment be waived and I be allowed to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 3841, which is designated as Senate Amendment A.

THE CLERK:

LCO 3841, Senate A, offered by Representative Willis and Senator Bye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to

summarize.

Is there objection? Objection?

Seeing none, Representative Willis.

REP. WILLIS (64th):

Thank you very much.

This amendment adds an exception for individuals who are admitted to a teacher preparation program. It allows them to be grandfathered so they may be able to continue with the program that they are in.

I move adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

The question before the Chamber is on adoption of Senate A. Will you care to remark further on Senate Amendment Schedule A?

Representative LeGeyt.

REP. LeGEYT: (17th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This amendment makes a good bill better and I encourage my colleagues to approve it.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir.

Will you care to remark further on Senate Amendment A?

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Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT: (8th):

I too rise in support of this amendment and urge my colleagues to support it.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, Representative Ackert.

Will you care to remark further on Senate Amendment Schedule A? Will you care to remark on Senate Amendment Schedule A?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor please signify it by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

All those opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The amendment is adopted.

Will you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Will you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Will you care to remark further?

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

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber. The House is taking a roll call vote. Members to the Chamber, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted? Please check the board to determine if your vote has been properly cast. If so the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally?

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill 382, as amended by Senate A in concurrence with the Senate.

Total number voting	136
Necessary for passage	69
Those voting Yea	136
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	15

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

The bill passes as amended in con -- with -- in concurrence with the Senate.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 416?

THE CLERK:

On page 21, Calendar 416, Senate Bill Number 214,
AN ACT CONCERNING PERMANENT ABSENTEE BALLOT STATUS FOR

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Thirty-four, it is calendar 177, but Substitute for Senate Bill Number 382, AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER CERTIFICATION, favorable report of the committee on education.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Good evening, Mr. President. Nice to see you again.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening. Long time no see.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you -- thank you, Mr. President.

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

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further? On acceptance and passage, will you remark?

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Clerk has in his possession LCO 3841. I ask that he call the amendment and I be allowed to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 3841, Senate A, offered by Representative Willis and Senator Bye.

THE CHAIR:

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Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

To provide a little context for the amendment, what this bill does is that this -- I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

On adoption, will you remark?

SENATOR BYE:

Yes. I'll provide a little context for the circle on this bill before the amendment so that that make sense. This bill is making a very simple change in our teacher certification requirements and -- and how we structured teacher certification. And it reverts back to the certification of ten years ago. And that is that the certification for early childhood makes it nursery or preschool to grade three, and elementary first grade to sixth grade.

A number of years ago kindergarten was added to the one to six to allow more flexibility within schools. This really had the effect of closing the pipeline of early childhood certified teachers coming out and increasing significantly the number of students going into elementary education.

And if you look now, we have a glut of elementary teachers. And with an ever-increasing number of preschool classrooms, we have a shortage of preschool teachers, so there's a workforce issue. And the other issue is that there's -- there's -- you need special skills to work with young children. You need to understand what are preliteracy skills instead of literacy skills, for example. So this makes sure that there's a special certification for people teaching preschool to third grade. So that's the point of the bill.

And I think that's important for the amendment. Because what the amendment does is that -- several folks came to me, Representative Sawyer and Ackert and

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Alberts, and they all had concerns that the current workforce would be grandfathered in and that any students who were in certification programs now would also be grandfathered in and be allowed to be maintain the K to 6 certificate since they'd started the program of study. And so that is what this amendment does.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark on the amendment?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President. And I do appreciate the introduction of this amendment. It certainly does help to make the bill slightly better, in that it does grandfather those that are currently in teacher preparation courses.

I know that there were still concerns even with this amendment, although I would support the amendment based on the underlying bill. However, it doesn't address the fact that it may continue to limit the flexibility of the individuals going into our programs. That they can easily float from kindergarten through sixth grade more easily should the demographics change and the economic situations change as well. I would have probably preferred for us to be able to have two different certifications, the pre-K through 3 and then an overlapping, maybe, kindergarten through six, but I think that -- I think that this amendment is worthwhile to support and it does make the underlying bill slightly better. And I'll reserve some of comments for, again, the underlying bill.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further on the amendment? Will you
remark further on the amendment?

If not, I'll try your minds. All those in favor,
please signify by saying aye.

VOICES:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Those opposed nay. The ayes have it. Senate A is
adopted.

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

This bill came to me from our higher education
institutions who have early childhood education
programs, who've seen their enrollments drop
significantly because many students heading off to
college to be teachers say, I want to be a
kindergarten teacher. And for many years, that person
got the preschool to grade three endorsement.

But when -- in a session about eight years ago, they
put kindergarten with the 1 to 6 certification that
closed down that pipeline. There -- there are real
pedagogical reasons that we had the three-to-three, if
you will, certification that have nothing to do with
principals and superintendents having flexibility. It
has to do with the fact that children from three years
old to third-grade learn differently. They learn
through active engagement. They learned through
conversation. They learn through play. And the way
that they learn to read is very different.

So that the current certification could have a teacher
teaching sixth grade one year and then come down and
teach kindergarten the next year without the skills
that they need. We have a huge achievement gap in

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this country, and we have a real problem with children learning to read by third grade. I know there's another bill in front of this General Assembly about just that.

And what the research shows is that teachers don't have all the training they need to teach reading. And this happens in the early years. So, I say, the biggest reason we need this bill is to assure that the people teaching those children in their preliteracy and early literacy years know how to work with children that age when their developing, not just literacy skills, but also skills of self-regulation, and how to have internal control so that they can sit at circle and listen to a story and listen to books.

I've had many examples -- those of you in the circle may or may not know, but I've taught preschool for many years. I've opened three or four public preschools. And I can tell you it's very distressing was going on with the practice in classrooms right now.

I recently had a teacher who worked for me for years call me to say that they were being asked to do site words out of context with their preschoolers. This is such an appropriate practice for young children. Young children learn to read by learning rhymes, by learning initial sounds, by seeing print used in a meaningful way. They -- you can teach them to read a word on a card, but all that is is a shape, and it doesn't have any information. And the children aren't growing their vocabulary.

So I stand here passionately because I so believe in the importance of teaching young children the way that they learn best, and that is through active engagement. It's not having a sixth-grade teacher teach kindergarten. It's having someone trained particularly to work with young children teaching kindergarten.

And I'll stop there because I'm sure there are a lot of questions. And I thank the circle for their indulgence. This is something I've watched personally as a teacher of early childhood education, and -- and seen the negative effects of elementary teachers

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teaching preschool and kindergarten in the early years of elementary. I don't think it's in our children's best interests.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise to discuss a couple of issues that came up and are of a concern certainly, locally, for some of our school systems. Over the many years, the 20-or-so years that I've been involved on local boards of ed and here at the Legislature, we've had different economic cycles. And during those cycles and also demographic shifts in our school-age population, many of our school systems have changed the configuration of schools.

Instead of building new schools, a lot of our schools have consolidated or moved their -- and shifted their grade levels around. I know in some of the towns I represent, they originally had a K-5 school structure and later on moved to a K-2 system, moved another group, three through five, into another school, then ultimately had a six, seventh and eighth grade school, and then, of course, high school, nine through 12. Some actually have school systems that include eight grade in a high school, some of them only have a seventh through eight, some seventh through ninth.

There are also a lot of schoolteachers with certifications that are a K-8 that, oftentimes, are moved down to the fifth level, depending on what happens again with the school-aged population.

So some of the changes that occur aren't necessarily based on what is the appropriate -- maybe educational decision but more economics. And we hope that that's not the case in most systems. We want to have the

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right structure that really deals with the educational needs, and which I do believe our chairman of this committee is most concerned with and has a great deal of expertise in, and is working hard to make our certification process relate most directly into what happens in the classroom, what's most beneficial, certainly for the child and the student which is of paramount importance, of course. But we also have to consider the other issues as well.

And my question would be, through you, Mr. President, to the proponent, if I could ask the question, and that would be, was there any consideration as to the thought of having the voluntary certification program for pre to three or even pre through two, but K through three, as well as a K-8 certification or even a K-6 certification?

Through you, Mr. -- Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Through you, Mr. President, no. There was not consideration of a -- of K to eight, again, because of the idea that young children learn differently. And I -- and I appreciate -- and I think Senator Boucher, you put your hand on some of the challenges that are school districts face based on the structure of how their schools and ages layout in -- in various buildings. I think that this certification, the preschool to three and one to six, gives six years of flexibility in both certifications.

So, you know, that's why I really see this as a workforce issue. Because the way that students enter our higher education system, wanting to be kindergarten teachers, now, when I advise students after the change was made at St. Joseph College, I would say to them I have to recommend you take the K to six because you might -- you might be more likely to get hired. But I said that with a heavy heart knowing that if they really wanted to teach kindergarten, they weren't going to be prepared in the

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same way as if they'd had the N to three.

So colleges continue to offer the N to three certifications, but the numbers dropped. In the years before that at St. Joseph's College, we had tripled the number of early childhood majors. And after the change, that all went away. So we had this burgeoning workforce to meet a demand, and then as the change happened, that's what happened. So, I believe that giving six years of flexibility for both certifications gives superintendents six years and principal six years is quite a range.

And I think that our school systems are hurting not having enough professionals who have early childhood training. So that even -- and in a way, this is a pipeline for principles and for superintendents.

I know a lot of kindergarten teachers who've been told they need to get the blocks out of the room. That there's no time for blocks. And if you know about how children learn math and how our young children learn, it's not a good thing. It's not a good thing for their brains and they're developing minds. But the curriculum specialists maybe taught middle school.

So if there were more people in the school that had early childhood training, I think we'd have better outcomes long-term. And there's -- there's certainly some research to show that that's important.

So the economics are important, but I think best practices outweighs it. And I think giving principals a six-year range for the certification, and both of them would have that, is a range. And even if they don't have a preschool in the school, it has a four-year range because it has kindergarten, first, second and third grade, and they can move the -- the teachers there.

And I'll also say that my experience, when I did run a kindergarten-specific program was that, if I had someone with the certification of one to six certification, that we could write a letter to the certification office and say we have a special case. This one to six teacher should really be allowed to teach kindergarten, so you could ask down a year or up

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a year. And if you add that, then you're really getting to eight years of flexibility, if the superintendent or principle thinks that that person can do it by tacking onto either year. So I think it's worth asking them to go to that extra effort if they want a teacher to teach outside of their area of expertise.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I do believe the good chairman of the higher ed committee was almost anticipating my next question because, in that regard, I was planning to ask, through you, Mr. President, of whether or not if this amendment were to pass and the bill were to pass, would it be an issue if demographics change dramatically, and our preschool population were to drop, and we had a higher enrollment in our higher grades, would the individual have to go back and get a -- an additional certification or would it -- would they be counseled to do both? Get a certification pre-K three and one through six, in order to cover their bases should something like that happen.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Through you, Mr. President.

That would be up to the student. But I can tell you from experience teaching teachers in higher ed that, traditionally, students go back and get their master's. And very often they go back to get their masters in special-education. And when they get their

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masters in special education, that can go, as I understand it, pretty much K to 12 with special-education certification, so that opens up the range. Maybe I'm off, and you can correct me, Senator Boucher. But maybe it's K to eight.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you for that answer, Mr. President.

I -- I see the real value in the argument to be made for this moving us to more specialized area of education. However, I -- I still have some reservations about the actual rolling out this in -- in the real world of changing economics and changing demographics in our local school systems, and how this would affect the professional life of an elementary school teacher.

But I -- I really do understand and support the value behind this, and will support this amendment.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Boucher.

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you.

You know, Mr. President, we, in other parts of this building, I think people are meeting on -- trying to see if they can find a resolution to Senate Bill 24, education reform. And I think the Governor, in opening day, talked about this being the year of education reform.

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To me, this is a significant change in our education policy in the State of Connecticut. I -- I partially wish it had been part of those overall conversations, but given the way they're going, maybe it's better off being by itself.

I'm not going to support this bill. And I'm going to speak just from my personal experiences, as three kids who have gone through the Fairfield public school system. My oldest is now a sophomore in high school. His very first day of public school kindergarten, after preschool, obviously, you're all excited. He had a wonderful teacher, John Grammatico. We go in -- you could go in as parents and watch classes. You can go in and read to the class. Had a great way about him.

You know, a lot of teachers will -- when they want the kids to all sit down and sit quiet, listen to the teacher, will focus on the students who aren't listening to what the teacher is asking them to do, he had a great way of praising those and focusing those who were doing the right things. You know, thanks, Matt, for sitting down, you know, crisscross applesauce, like I liked you to, wanted you to, stuff like that. Well, he gets out of kindergarten, gets assigned as teacher for first grade, and it's the same teacher. School system, principle, superintendent had made a decision that, based on students and needs and other things, to make him a first-grade teacher.

Fast forward to my son getting out of that elementary school and going to middle school. My two daughters are now in that elementary school. I see Mr. Grammatico, as I called him, at a local Fairfield Education Association picnic that they have over the summer. He's no longer at Mill Hill Elementary School. He's at another elementary school teaching fourth grade.

I know people whose kids who go there. They love him. Just as we loved him as a kindergarten teacher and a first grade teacher. He can't do that under this. If he were going to start becoming a teacher five years from now, he would have to choose to be pre-K through three or one through six.

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My son's second-grade teacher, Mrs. Holt, awesome teacher. Every kid when they left the class had to look her in the eye, shake her hand firmly, or they had to go to the back -- the back of the room.

My youngest daughter graduated from the elementary school. I hadn't seen her in a couple of years, and there she is a fifth-grade teacher. She was my son's second-grade teacher. I thought she was amazing. Parents there loved her as a fifth-grade teacher.

My small view of the public school teachers in our state, at the elementary school level -- and I speak especially to the towns I represent, but Fairfield, which all three of my kids went through their public school system -- they are extraordinary.

And -- and I'm not saying this bill says they are not. And I certainly recognize the need to make sure we have enough preschool teachers because, hopefully, we'll have every child who wants to go to preschool in a preschool slot. But I -- I don't like this change.

I just think there's so much going on -- and I can't speak to every school district. And they're not all like Fairfield, and they're all not like the four towns I represent. I understand there are vast differences. And I don't know if this change is directed at certain districts or the other. I don't know that, other than what the proponent thinks is a better direction.

But what I saw with my own kids and my own experience in our town's public school systems is teachers being moved throughout that elementary school. And I have nothing but extraordinary respect for the -- for the elementary school teachers in our town who gave my kids that tremendous foundation that they all have now, all doing well in middle school and high school.

So, because I saw teachers go from kindergarten to first grade to fourth grade, from second grade to fifth-grade, I think that works. I'm not convinced that we need -- that there's something broken that we need to change and, therefore, am not going to support the bill today.

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Good evening, Madam President. Nice to see you.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Nice seeing you, Senator. Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, Mr. Clerk, would please open -- call for a roll call vote and I'll open the machines.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Senators please return to the Chamber.
Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted?

If all members have voted, the machine will be locked and, Mr. Clerk, will you call the tally, please.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill Number 382 as amended by Senate A.

Total Number voting	36
Necessary for passage	19
Those voting Yea	28
Those voting Nay	8
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The bill is passed.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

And on page 35, Calendar 200, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 41, AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, favorable report of the Committee on