

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

PA 14-38

HB5559

House	5052-5059	8
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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2014**

**VOL.57
PART 15
4809– 5187**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill 25 as amended by Senate "A" and by House "A".

Total number voting	140
Necessary for passage	71
Those voting Yea	79
Those voting Nay	61
Those absent and not voting	11

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill as amended passes not in concurrence with the Senate.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 191.

THE CLERK:

Mr. Speaker, on page 6, House Calendar 191, favorable report of the joint standing committee on Education, House Bill 5559, AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIFORM REGIONAL SCHOOL CALENDAR.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

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

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question is on acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

Will you remark, sir?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. The bill that's now before us is the result of work by a task force that looked at this issue of uniform regional school calendars. It's something that we need to move toward. But with leadership from our good colleague, Representative Demicco, it was found that it would be best if we delayed the start of this process from July 1, 2015, to July 1, 2016. I think that's a sensible move that will ensure that contracts can be honored. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Lavielle.

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REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The -- the bill before us is a -- is a partial solution to a problem that has been evoked by quite a number of school districts and superintendents, particularly in the southwestern part of the state who were very disappointed when the regional school calendars were imposed by the implementer bill from last year. They feel it is a mandate that they are forced to comply with where all of their requirements in our region for scheduling a very, very different. So although they don't have the possibility here of opting out of the calendar, at least they have two years from now to prepare. And so I think that it's a measure that will be of great help to quite a number of school districts and I urge passage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam.

Would you care to remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the good chair for raising this legislation, the good remarks

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from Representative Lavielle, and the good work from Noreen Kōkoruda on the task force. But I also have -- I have an amendment, Mr. Speaker. The Clerk has amendment, it is LCO 5191. If it please the Clerk to call and I be allowed to summarize.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 5191 which will be designated House Amendment "A".

THE CLERK:

House Amendment "A", LCO 5191, introduced by Minority Leader Cafero, et al.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The gentleman has sought leave of the Chamber to summarize. Is there objection? Is there objection? Seeing none, you may proceed with summarization, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It actually has just two parts. The first part, if you have a local summer program for -- a day program run by your municipality that it extends that that municipality can also run an after school program with the same exemptions for licensure. The second part of the amendment kind of expands the internship program to youth. Essentially grants that eligible small businesses for eligible

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small businesses, manufacturing under the Subsidized Training and Employee Program, it kind of continues that. Our Smart Start program -- not Smart Start program, we just covered that one, but our Step Up program. And I move adoption.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question before the Chamber is adoption of House Amendment "A".

Would you care to remark further?

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank Representative Giuliano and Representative Carpino and others on this piece of legislation and I urge the support of the Chamber.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark?

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to observe that I consider this a friendly amendment. While it -- the first section to me is commonsensical. And the second part, while it's not precisely what I would have drafted, you know, we recognize that this process

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we engage in is one of compromise in the art of the possible. And I think that my colleagues have done a nice job of working with us to fashion something that we can all work with. So I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this House Amendment "A".

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark further on House Amendment "A"?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor of House Amendment "A" please signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Those opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The amendment is adopted.

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

If not, staff and guests to the well of the House, members take your seats, the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representative is voting by roll.

The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Will members please return to the Chamber immediately.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted? Will the members please check the board to make sure your vote is properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Representative Albis, for what reason do you rise, sir?

REP. ALBIS (99th):

Mr. Speaker, I wish to be cast in the affirmative.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Will the Clerk please indicate Representative Albis wishes to be cast -- the cast is vote in the affirmative.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5559 amended by House "A".

Total number voting 141

Necessary for passage 71

Those voting Yea 141

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Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 10

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill as amended passes.

Is there any business on the Clerk's desk?

THE CLERK:

Mr. Speaker, we have a favorable report Senate bills.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Aresimowicz.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Yes, good morning, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move we waive the reading of Senate favorable reports and have the bills immediately tabled for the Calendar.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Seeing no objection, so ordered. /

Are there any announcements or introductions?

Representative Piscopo.

REP. PISCOPO (76th):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker, for a journal notation.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

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cah/gbr
SENATE

12
May 3, 2014

002464

Total Number Voting		34
Necessary for Adoption	18	
Those voting Yea		32
Those voting Nay		2
Absent not voting		2

THE CHAIR:

The bill will be -- and the bill has passed.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

House Bill Number 5466, AN ACT --

THE CHAIR:

Sir, sir.

THE CLERK:

Oh, House Bill Number 5559 --

THE CHAIR:

That's good.

THE CLERK:

-- AN ACT CONCERNING A UNIFORM REGIONAL SCHOOL
CALENDAR.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes, thank you, Madam President.

Got three in a row here. That's unusual but yes,
thank you.

Moving right along, I move the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

The motion is on acceptance and passage.

Will you remark?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes, thank you, Madam President.

This bill that is before us was a third in a series of bills that were acted upon by the House last night which -- this one particularly addresses the -- a regional school calendar which there's some districts within the state who feel that there needs to be some coordination between calendars.

What this bill does is delay for one year starting in -- on July 1, 2015 to -- to July 1, 2016 the requirement that each local or regional board of education adopt a uniform school calendar -- regional school calendar that those regional education service centers for that board that have developed and been approved.

Right now, by law, each RESC must develop a uniform school calendar by April 1st of 2014, which was this year, to be used in the region. The bill also gives the school boards an additional year until the school year of 2017 to actually implement that uniform calendar especially if there are issues around existing employee contracts.

Also the bill, because of an amendment that was House Amendment "A" that was included in this bill last night, adds the provision regarding the Step New Apprentice Program. That new apprentice program will allow the Commissioner of Labor to establish the program at her discretion and it has -- the Step Program will provide grants for small businesses and manufacturers --

THE CHAIR:

Excuse me. Thank you, Chamber.

Please proceed, Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

It will provide grants for small businesses and manufacturers to hire high school and college students. This is a specific program under the Department of Labor and I urge passage.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you very much, Madam President.

Madam President, I do rise to support the bill and the amendment that is before us. However, I -- I do have to say that the uniform calendar process has been of -- of some concern and some discussion in our local areas.

There's -- there's some concern on -- on the part of many local school districts that to be required to have a uniform calendar that may not coincide with some of the needs that are -- that are local and that have different considerations being made culturally, religiously and others and even in some of the school activities that take place could possibly be something that they would have preferred for it to be just basically a local issue.

So that was one of the issues. The fact that it is delayed, however, is probably a good idea for whatever purposes it is. Additionally, then we also appreciate the fact that the amendment that was put on here I think was very helpful to the program that is here and

considers some needs that were brought before the House and is something that we can certainly support here in the Senate.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark? Senator McKinney, good evening, sir.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Good evening, Madam.

Madam, through you, a question to the proponent.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Senator Stillman, with respect to the section that delays the implementation of the regional school calendar, and -- and my fault for not understanding the full implications of that, through you, after the one year delay, is it a requirement that there be implemented regional school calendars?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes, thank you, Madam President.

Through you, the -- the bill itself is -- is stating that those local or regional boards of education may adopt -- may adopt a uniform school calendar and

they're regional in nature, not statewide.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

And thank you, Madam President.

So it would be, through you, Madam President, up to multiple school districts through their boards of education should they so agree to then adopt that school calendar? There's no requirement that one do that.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, that's correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you very much for your answer, Senator Stillman.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes, thank you, Madam President.

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

THE CHAIR:

There is an objection. We will have a roll call vote.

Mr. Clerk, will you please call for a roll call vote.

Nope, never mind. I've made a mistake. But don't put
that (inaudible).

We're going to have -- if there's no objection, we
will put it on Consent.

Thank you.

At this time, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, we will prepare some additional items
later and we believe that -- at least we're hopeful
that the -- the budget from the House will be in our
-- in our possession shortly.

So we will take, at this point, what I hope will be a
brief recess.

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand in recess, a very short recess
we hope.

(On motion of Senator Looney of the 11th District, the
Senate recessed at 8:11 p.m., to reconvene at the call
of the chair.)

THE CLERK:

cah/gbr
SENATE

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002531

Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill Number 5596.

Total Number Voting		36
Necessary for Adoption	19	
Those voting Yea		21
Those voting Nay		15
Absent not voting		0

THE CHAIR:

The budget is passed -- the bill is passed.

Will you remark? Will you remark? Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

At this point we call for a -- a vote on our Consent Calendar from items earlier today.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, will read the -- the bills on the Consent Calendar please.

MR. CLERK:

We have House Bill 5562 and House Bill 5559.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Mr. Clerk, will you call for a roll call vote and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.
Roll call on the Consent Calendar has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, all members have voted, the machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk, will you give the tally.

THE CLERK:

On today's Consent Calendar.

Total Number Voting		36
Necessary for Adoption	19	
Those voting Yea		36
Those voting Nay		0
Absent not voting		0

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar has passed.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I believe the Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda Number 3.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

I do have Senate Agenda Number 3, dated Saturday, May 3, 2014. It's been copied and is on Senators' desks.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**EDUCATION
PART 3
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2014

in part by parent contributions. So that's the biggest source of any income.

There's one federal line item, the Community Learning Center Grant provides both year around and summer support, and originally it was just after school; and it's been doing a little bit more with summer over the years, but it's not enough money to actually provide high quality full year for as many children as they would like to.

REP. ACKERT: Okay. Because I know a lot of local libraries do that very well, and I'd be interested in seeing what those numbers were. But thank you so much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Other questions for the witness? If not, thank you, Michelle, for your testimony and your hard work.

MICHELLE DUCETTE-CUNNINGHAM: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Is Doreen Marvin still here? Terrific. And then next up would be Cindy Bankoski. She's still here, and after Cindy will be Bryan Hall.

DOREEN MARVIN: Thank you, Representative Fleischmann, members of the Education Committee.

My name is Doreen Marvin. I serve as the Director of Develop of LEARN, the Regional Educational Service Center in Southeastern Connecticut. I also have the distinct pleasure to serve as the Co-Chair of the regional calendar task force, along with your esteemed colleague, Representative Mike Demicco, and some of your other committee members who are

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here today.

This testimony is in support of raised bill 5559, an act concerning a uniform school calendar as well as the complete recommendations of the uniform regional school calendar task force.

You have written testimony from Dr. Eileen Howley, who is the Executive Director of Learn, that speaks to LEARN's support of the bill and the history of the successful regional calendar in the LEARN region. I'm going to speak to my support as co-chair of the task force.

The task force representatives included members of the Legislature, yourselves, the State Board of Education, Connecticut Federation of Teachers, Connecticut Education Association, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Connecticut Regional Education Service Center, Connecticut Federal of Catholic School Parents, a school principal, president of the Connecticut Parent-Teacher Association, and a representative from First Student Transportation.

The task force listened to presentations from the MORE Commission, two regions that currently have successful regional calendars, from the Hartford Regional Student Transportation System, from the Connecticut Secretary of State regarding her support for schools to be student-free during elections, and we also heard from a Connecticut citizen supporting student-free days during voting for safety reasons.

The work of the task force was extensive and collaborative. Their recommendations were thoughtful, encompassing, and inclusive.

The bill supports the task force recommendation of delaying the mandated year of implementation to allow school districts more time to modify binding contractual language and avoid unnecessary impact bargaining costs.

Based on the lessons learned from the regions currently using regional calendars, I urge the committee to support the delay in the mandated compliance and to consider all the task force recommendations. These recommendations, including allowing for a one-year implementation delay waiver for districts that are unable to rectify contractual issues prior to 2016, 2017 school year (sic).

Additional recommendations include individual district flexibility of up to five days and to direct the Commissioner of Education to assure that the vocational technical system and other public schools of choice are part of the regional calendar planning.

The task force also developed guidelines for the Regional Education Service Centers to use within their respective regions to create a regional calendar that assures a minimum of 180 student school days, two common professional development days, start date, and all the rest of the guidelines. I urge you to support those guidelines as well.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you very much for your testimony and your service, not only to Southeastern Connecticut but to the state through the task force on uniform school calendar.

DOREEN MARVIN: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: I want to give you a chance to respond to a concern I've heard from some who

are in the leadership of the Legislature who said, well, this task force met, and it's looking for things to be slowed down. But this should happen soon, and so let's not delay. Let's try to get the uniformity sooner rather than later. Could you just sketch out what kind of potential downsides that approach would have?

DOREEN MARVIN: If you look at the report that was submitted by the task force, you will see an awful lot of data at the end of the report, and you'll see that there are some regions that are already using this. So there's some uniformity already in place.

And then the challenges with not slowing it down is that there are some school districts that will incur costs to reopen some contracts. There is some contractual language in districts that actually specify the number of teacher days and specific vacations within the calendar. And also they may have to reopen their transportation contract; if those have specific days also associated with them.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you.

DOREEN MARVIN: No problem.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: That was what I imagined the response would be, but it's good to hear it from you, a practitioner on the record.

Are there other questions or comments from members of the committee? Representative Demicco to be followed by Representative Lavielle.

REP. DEMICCO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to acknowledge all the hard work that Doreen did as the co-chair of the task force. I was

fortunate enough to have her as my co-chair, and also on the task force was Representative Kokoruda from this committee as well as a couple members of the Planning and Development Committee. And all the heavy lifting was Doreen's, and I was the beneficiary -- we're all the beneficiary of her work. How's that?

DOREEN MARVIN: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: That was nice of you, Representative Demicco. I will observe, you put in your hours too, as did Representative Kokoruda and the rest.

Representative Lavielle, you have a question?

REP. LAVIELLE: I do. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon and thank you for your testimony. I certainly have no problem with the idea of a delay. I join you there. I do, however, come from a part of the state that is rather resistant to the idea of having to do this at all because all of the towns differ in terms of how they would like to organize their calendars. You have a lot of towns in very close proximity in Southwestern Connecticut.

DOREEN MARVIN: Uh-huh.

REP. LAVIELLE: And they actually don't feel that there's much efficiency to be realized or anything else, and I wondered how you would -- what your feeling would be in terms of flexibility simply for a region not to go to a regional calendar.

DOREEN MARVIN: I think it's important to note that the task force committee was charged with coming up with guidelines. So that's what they

did.

In keeping in mind the Southwestern Connecticut situation, if you'll note in the report it actually -- one of their issues was the start date. I'll just use that as an example, and in the report it says the fourth Wednesday of August, give or take, plus or minus three days. And if you look at that from school days, that brings you to either Monday or the following Tuesday, which is typically the day after Labor Day.

So the recommendations from the task force included the concerns from Southwestern Connecticut in order for them to keep that flexibility. Also in there is an additional five days of flexibility for a number of reason that may come up, including, as we've had this year, inclement weather, or construction delays, or things along those lines.

And to address your piece around whether or not there are deficiencies, the two regions that do have voluntary regional school calendars, they've seen savings anywhere from I will say as small as \$12,000, although for a very tiny district that's a lot of money, to about \$52,000, if I recall correctly. And the districts in those regions are not very large.

REP. LAVIELLE: Understood. And I appreciate your answers, which are thorough, and I did see those ranges of flexibility in terms of numbers of days in both those cases. And there remains pretty great skepticism in my part of the state.

DOREEN MARVIN: Uh-huh.

REP. LAVIELLE: Also, just I think from the point of view that these districts would prefer to, I

guess, control their own destiny in a manner of speaking. But it's something I anticipate in terms of commentary on the bill itself, but I, of course, appreciate the work of the task force to try to be flexible and you're coming to share your thoughts with us.

And I believe we'll still have some commentary from the district.

DOREEN MARVIN: I would imagine.

REP. LAVIELLE: Thank you so much.

DOREEN MARVIN: No problem.

REP. LAVIELLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Any other questions for the witness? Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Representative Fleischmann.

How are you, Doreen?

DOREEN MARVIN: I'm good. How are you?

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you for waiting all day. You get to leave just in time for rush hour traffic.

We do appreciate your work on this and so many other things that learning is involved in.

You know, I appreciate your understanding in putting this off for a year. I did receive some feedback from, you know, our end of the state in Southeastern Connecticut, especially about the start date of school, and the concern about tourism, and the impact it could have on businesses, you know, in terms of ending the

summer vacation and that kind of thing.

So I think there are still probably a couple things that need to be looked at, and I am -- I think a uniform school calendar for the state would be a great idea. I just don't -- I just think we are a small state, and we have such diverse interests in this state. And I'm concerned as to how well it can work.

So I appreciate the sort of leeway in a day or two here and there, but those are some of the concerns in terms of businesses.

DOREEN MARVIN: Yes. Everybody actually heard that. If you'll look at the data, most start dates are within two days of the Wednesday that was suggested by the task force. Some are on Monday, and most were on Thursday even. A few were after Labor Day, usually starting right afterwards.

The biggest deficiencies that the committee could see would, of course, be in transportation, which was not the charge of this task force, thank you very much. We appreciate that that was not part of it. And then also there may be some efficiencies if we make sure that the vo-tech system and the public schools of choice are on the same calendar.

The committee looked at other states that may have statewide calendars, and none were to be found. So it was not a recommendation of this task force that it be a statewide calendar, instead just look at regions.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Any other questions? If not, thank you very much.

Testimony
Submitted to the
Education Committee
March 17, 2014

Raised Bill No. 5559: An Act Concerning A Uniform School Calendar

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleishmann, and Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Dr. Craig Edmondson, and I serve as the Executive Director of Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES), the regional educational service center for the twenty-five school districts in South Central Connecticut. I am also here as a representative of the RESC Alliance, a member of the M.O.R.E. Commission, and a member of the Regional School Calendar Task Force where I represent both ACES and the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents.

Today, I am submitting written testimony in support of Raised Bill No.5559, An Act Concerning A Uniform School Calendar. I appreciate the work of the General Assembly during these unprecedented times of fiscal and educational challenges and I thank you for the work you do.

This bill supports the adoption of the Regional School Calendar Task Force's recommendations to allow the Regional Educational Service Centers to continue their work in coordinating the development and implementation of a regional uniform calendar. Delaying the mandated year of implementation will allow districts time to modify binding contractual language and avoid unnecessary impact bargaining costs. In addition, it allows for appropriate communication to communities and districts regarding changes to some long-standing vacation practices and recognized holidays. I urge the Committee to support the delay in the mandated compliance and to consider all of the Task Force's recommendations. After careful consideration and at times spirited debate, Task Force representatives which included the members of the legislature, State Board

of Education, Connecticut Federation of Teachers, Connecticut Education Association, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, the Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents, a school principal, the president of the Connecticut Parent Teacher Association and the general manager from First Student Transportation all recognized the potential benefits of a common calendar and the potential opportunities it will create. These benefits include shared services, personnel, and professional development as well as coordinated transportation contracts, to name a few. In considering a common calendar however, we were deeply concerned about districts losing the flexibility that would allow them to recognize the time-honored customs and traditions in their respective communities. After significant discussion we agreed on a solution that would achieve the spirit of the mandate but still allow districts to adopt a calendar that could accommodate their unique needs.

The recommendation included the following:

Allow for individual districts flexibility of up to five (5) days within a regional calendar since:

- cultural and religious observances drive individual town calendars based on community need
- an individual school district may have unanticipated circumstances such as construction delays, serious maintenance issues, and student assessment windows

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the current raised bill and hope that you agree to the additional recommendations so we can achieve the potential outcomes that were originally identified by the M.O.R.E. Commission.

Thank you for your time, commitment and dedication to the public school students we serve.

TESTIMONY**H.B. No. 5559 AN ACT CONCERNING A UNIFORM SCHOOL CALENDAR****JOSEPH J. CIRASUOLO, ED.D.****EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR****CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS****MARCH 12, 2014**

The CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) which represents the superintendents of schools in CT along with over a hundred school system central office administrators supports the enactment H.B. No 5559 AN ACT CONCERNING A UNIFORM SCHOOL CALENDAR.

For as long as anyone can remember, CT's school districts have operated on a calendar that has been determined by that district's board of education. As a result, structures and practices such as contracts for student transportation have been aligned with the calendar of the individual district.

Now, CT is transitioning from this situation to one in which school districts will operate in accordance with calendars that have been established by the regional education service centers (RESCs) in which the districts are located. This transition, if implemented well, has the potential of resulting in the following good things.

- Contracts for services such as student transportation could be established on a regional basis thus opening up the potential for financial savings due to economies of scale.
- More important, regional calendars would foster personalized learning because it would be easier to allow children for whom it would be worthwhile to enroll in programs outside of the districts in which they reside if all the districts in a given area of the state are operating on the same calendar.

Under present legislation, the transition to regional calendars is to take place with the 2015-16 school year.

To assist with this transition, the Uniform Regional School Calendar Task Force was formed. This body which is composed of representatives of those who will have to make the transition to regional calendars work has worked diligently since its inception and has reached two conclusions.

1. The transition to regional calendars statewide needs to be postponed to the 2016-17 school year.
2. If there are individual districts that have student transportation contracts that presently include school year 2016-17, those districts should have the option of beginning their participation in a regional calendar in school year 2017-18.

Both of these conclusions make sense. Taking an extra year to transition to regional calendars so as to do it right is wise. Not compelling school districts to revise existing student transportation contracts is also wise.

Since H.B. No. 5559, enacts these conclusions into statute, CAPSS urges the legislature to enact H.B. No. 5559.