

Written Testimony of

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Before the Education Committee

**HB 5378 AAC THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN PROGRAMS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS IN CONNECTICUT.**

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I am a kindergarten teacher in Connecticut. This bill does not sufficiently address the ongoing crisis in Connecticut's classrooms. Children as young as kindergarten age are coming to school with serious social and emotional issues which cause them to exhibit violence against their teachers and classmates. They disrupt learning and their actions expose their classmates to trauma and violence as well. They take up a sizable percentage of their teacher's time and attention, to the detriment of their fellow classmates. We need to change the starting age of kindergarten so that four year olds are not attempting to navigate full day kindergarten curriculum. We need to require that schools have plans in place for students whose behavior indicates deeper needs. We need to address once and for all the practice of ignoring or minimizing this serious, violent, and disruptive behavior. We need to stop demonstrating to children who exhibit violence against their teacher and classmates that there are no consequences, and that they will be allowed to return to their classrooms after a brief time away, only to start the cycle of disruption again. If we do not have the political fortitude to address these issues, we are going to continue to see people leave the profession, and it is going to become even more difficult to attract qualified people to the teaching profession.

