



Connecticut Education Association
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Governance

Kate Dias, President
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Testimony of

Kate Dias
Connecticut Education Association

Before the
Appropriations Committee

Re:

HB 5048 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING
JUNE 30, 2025

February 15, 2024

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Representative Nuccio, Senator Berthel, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Kate Dias, and I am President of the Connecticut Education Association. CEA represents more than 40,000 active and retired teachers from over 150 school districts across the state.

CEA commends Governor Lamont for his efforts to recognize Connecticut's educators, school staff, and students with proposals to eliminate the initial teacher licensure application fee, which costs aspiring educators approximately \$1 million each year. This is a step in the right direction to address the persistent teacher shortage. We also welcome his proposal to increase Education Cost Sharing grants by \$5.7 million, continue universal free breakfast, and expand free lunch to additional qualifying students.

However, the governor's proposed cuts of \$60 million in funding already approved by the legislature for magnet, charter, and vocational schools are of serious concern. These proposed cuts will have negative consequences for students' academic achievement and emotional growth at a time when their needs are greater than ever. The impacts will be felt everywhere, but especially in our most vulnerable communities. If we are going to address the lingering problems caused by the pandemic and our state's persistent teacher shortage, then we must prioritize the funding necessary to turn things around.

CEA urges the Appropriations Committee members to support a budget that focuses on funding our schools, targets funding to attract and retain qualified teachers, and makes our schools the best possible places to teach and learn.

Thank you.