



Connecticut Education Association

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Testimony of

Joslyn DeLancey
Connecticut Education Association

Before the
Education Committee

Re:
SB 1459 AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER SALARIES.

March 12, 2025

Senator McCrory, Representative Leeper, Senator Berthel, Representative Zupkus, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Joslyn DeLancey, and I am Vice President of the Connecticut Education Association (CEA), which represents educators in over 150 school districts across the state. Today I am testifying in support of the intent of SB 1459, which seeks to establish a minimum starting salary for educators and enhance compensation for all teachers.

As an educator from Darien, I recognize that my community and others like it have been fortunate in their ability to offer competitive salaries and resources that attract and retain high-quality teachers. However, the disparity in teacher compensation across districts is both unsustainable and unjust. Our students, regardless of zip code, deserve passionate, highly qualified educators who are not forced to leave the profession or move to wealthier districts simply to make ends meet.

A uniform minimum starting salary is essential in ensuring that all districts can recruit and retain talented educators. Right now, too many early-career teachers in lower-resourced communities face a difficult choice between staying in a profession they love or seeking financial stability elsewhere. This not only exacerbates inequities between districts but also weakens the overall quality of public education in our state.

Furthermore, SB 1459's provisions to fund the enhancement of salaries across the board are not just about fairness; they are about addressing a growing workforce crisis. Teacher shortages are no longer confined to specific subject areas or struggling districts. Even in well-resourced communities, we are seeing fewer qualified candidates entering the profession as the financial and emotional toll of teaching continues to rise. Without competitive salaries, we cannot expect to attract and retain the best educators for our students.

This is not just about our teachers—it is about our students and the future of our public education system. Investing in fair and competitive teacher salaries strengthens our schools, our communities, and our economy. SB 1459 is a necessary step toward ensuring that every district, regardless of wealth, can provide students with the high-quality education they deserve.

Finally, Connecticut voters strongly support this priority. A 2023 CEA survey of Connecticut voters found that 83% of voters believe increasing teacher salaries is essential to addressing the teacher shortage, and 90% believe that teachers should be paid more than or at least comparable to other professions requiring similar education and training. These figures make it clear that the public values and understands the need for competitive educator salaries to maintain a strong and stable teaching workforce.

As a note, we would urge the Committee to clarify in this legislation that the teacher retention grant funding must be used not only to raise the salaries of certified teachers to meet the proposed minimum but also to enhance salaries for all educators. CEA has also advocated for the importance of implementing and funding these salary increases over a three-year period rather than within a single year, ensuring a sustainable and equitable transition for all districts.

For these reasons, I urge you to support SB 1459 with some slight changes and take action to once again make teaching a sustainable and respected career in our state. Thank you for your time and commitment to public education.