



Connecticut Education Association

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Governance

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Testimony of
Joslyn DeLancey, Vice President
Connecticut Education Association

Before the
Finance Committee
Re:

**HB 7273 AN ACT IMPOSING A TAX ON CERTAIN SWEETENED BEVERAGES, SYRUPS
AND POWDERS AND DEDICATING THE REVENUE GENERATED TO A UNIVERSAL FREE
SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM**

**SB 1557 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE INVESTMENT BOARD AND CONCERNING
INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE'S
PENSION FUNDS**

April 14, 2025

Good afternoon, Representative Horn, Senator Fonfara, Representative Polletta, Senator Fazio and distinguished members of the Finance Committee

My name is Joslyn DeLancey, and I am the vice president of the Connecticut Education Association (CEA), the state's largest association of certified public school teachers, representing over 40,000 active, retired, and aspiring educators across Connecticut. CEA works to improve the lives of our teachers, the success of our students, and the quality of public education in our state.

HB 7273

CEA appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 7273. Educators know that hungry students cannot learn the skills necessary to achieve their full potential.

Good nutrition is instrumental in promoting children's brain development and ensuring students are prepared for learning each day.

Sugary beverages are the leading source of added sugar in children's diets and are a significant contributor to childhood obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. A tax on sugary drinks promotes healthier nutritional choices and can help improve childhood health outcomes, while generating much-needed revenue to support universal free school meals.

School meals are the only consistent source of balanced nutrition for many students. Expanding free school meal programs ensures that every child has access to nutritious food, which is necessary for their health, well-being, and academic success. Unfortunately, federal funding for the school meal program has been drastically reduced under the Trump Administration, which could impact as many as 262 Connecticut schools, affecting more than 128,000 children.¹

Nutritious school meals help establish healthy eating habits and reduce the risk of chronic diseases like obesity and diabetes. They also ensure that students are alert and ready to take on their studies with the energy and focus needed to excel. We applaud the committee for this forward-thinking legislation and respectfully urge members to approve HB 7273 without delay.

SB1557

CEA opposes SB 1557. The state's management of the pension fund has been sound and given uncertainties in the market, we believe that restructuring oversight of the fund would not be productive.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ <https://frac.org/blog/new-proposal-drastically-reduces-number-of-schools-eligible-for-community-eligibility-provision>