Connecticut Education Association

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Policy, Research, & Government Relations
Ray Rossomando, Director

Testimony of

Ray Rossomando

Connecticut Education Association

Before the

Planning and Development Committee

Re:

HB 5447 AN ACT CONCERNING LIMITS TO PROPERTY TAX INCREASES

February 3, 2025

Greetings to Senator Rahman, Representative Kavros DeGraw, and esteemed members of the Planning and Development Committee. I am Ray Rossomando, Director of Policy, Research, and Government Relations for the Connecticut Education Association (CEA). CEA is the state's largest association of certified public-school teachers, representing over 43,000 active and retired teachers from 160 school districts 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.

CEA testifies in opposition to HB 5447, which establishes a property tax cap on local property tax increases.

HB 5447 usurps local decision-making authority and could result in the unnecessary politicization of school funding. Passage of this bill would undermine the work of superintendents and elected board of education members who are charged with determining the level of funding necessary to meet students' needs and to carry out the educational duties of the state.

Policies limiting local property tax revenue have failed already in many states. A limit enacted in Massachusetts resulted in schools and firehouses being shuttered, programs from libraries to varsity sports being cut or eliminated, and fees being instituted for classes like music.

California infamously imposed Proposition 13, which is a cap on property taxes that has decimated public schools and left a wake of unintended consequences. New York more recently imposed a cap that has resulted in schools being unable to keep up with the needs of the children in its schools, and local budgets incapable of responding to rising fixed costs of health care. Michigan's experience illustrated the problems local revenue limits cause in times of recession, and their inability to respond to volatile changes in state funding for municipalities.

Policies that limit revenue growth become vulnerable to rising costs, inflation, and recessions. They result in inequities that discriminate against new, younger aspiring homeowners. And they tend to preserve "intergenerational wealth" at the expense of individuals and families just beginning to make ends meet.[1]

Limiting local property tax revenue growth is an idea that has been tried over and over again and an idea that has failed communities across the country.

We strongly oppose this bill.