



Connecticut Education Association

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Testimony of

Elizabeth Sked

Connecticut Education Association

Before the

Education Committee

Re:

SB 1392 An Act Concerning Educator Certification

Senator McCrory, Representative Leeper, Senator Berthel, Representative Zupkus, and members of the Education Committee. Good morning. My name is Elizabeth Sked, and I am the Education Issues Specialist for the Connecticut Education Association (CEA). I am here today to testify on SB 1392. CEA strongly opposes SB 1392.

While we completely agree with the goal of establishing alternative options for teacher certification candidates to demonstrate content knowledge, we cannot support SB 1392. This bill presents serious concerns that could weaken educator preparation and certification standards in Connecticut.

First, as we noted in testimony submitted by CEA President Kate Dias, SB 1392 circumvents the authority and expertise of the Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board (CEPCB). Through the leadership of this committee, CEPCB was established in PA 24-41 to oversee educator certification and modernize the certification process. It was also specifically tasked with developing additional, and more innovative, options for certification candidates to demonstrate content knowledge. CEPCB recently voted to maintain content area assessments like PRAXIS II and charged an ad hoc committee of the board to consider and recommend more innovative options. Passage of SB 1392 would circumvent the important work of this board.

Existing law relies on a measure, PRAXIS II, which is a standardized assessment considered research-based, consistent, and psychometrically valid and reliable. We understand that PRAXIS II can also be fraught with bias and limitations in assessing whether candidates can actually teach content knowledge well. Potentially good teachers are prevented from receiving certification because of it. Identifying viable and authentic options that are reliable but avoid bias from standardized approaches requires due diligence. CEPCB, with its input from key stakeholders, including experienced educators, will be vital in ensuring that the most effective alternative options are developed.

In addition, CEA is concerned about the specific alternative options proposed. The bill implements a yet-to-be-developed, unproven, and potentially costly portfolio system for assessing content knowledge. This is concerning for several reasons. It lacks research to support its validity or reliability and creates an unnecessary financial and administrative burden on the Connecticut State Department of Education, educator preparation programs, and candidates. It also adds a portfolio requirement for new teachers, right after the state eliminated the EdTPA portfolio due to its excessive burden on candidates and its disconnectedness from assessing whether someone can actually teach. Review and consideration of such an option would best be completed by the CEPCB.

We are also concerned that the bill's rushed implementation timeline is very unrealistic. It mandates changes by July 1, 2025 – a mere 4 months from now. That is nowhere near enough time to develop, test, and implement any new certification processes and to be sure that they too are not biased. Such a hasty shift in policy could lead to confusion, inconsistency, and unintended negative consequences for teacher preparation programs, school districts, and aspiring educators.

In summary, SB 1392 undermines the integrity of Connecticut's educator preparation system, disregards the expertise of CEPCB, and introduces logistical and financial burdens without a proven benefit. I strongly urge this committee to reject this bill and uphold our commitment to high standards for Connecticut's educators and students.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.