



**Connecticut Education Association**

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**CEA-Retired Leaders**

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*Testimony of*

**Bill Murray**

**Connecticut Education Association Retired**

*Before the*

**Appropriations Committee**

February 20, 2025

Good evening, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Bill Murray. I am a retired teacher from Danbury, and I am currently President of CEA Retired. As both an active and retired teacher, I proudly served on the Teachers' Retirement Board for many years, as vice chair of the Board and as a member of the insurance committee that established the current retiree health insurance plan.

Before the current plan, retired teachers had a self-funded Medicare Supplement plan. When that plan was in effect, often the state did not meet their one-third required obligation. Our healthy, carefully managed \$140 million fund was depleted and on the verge of bankruptcy. The State proposed that it would pay its one-third cost obligation for a cheaper Medicare Advantage plan. We agreed, and we worked to get the best plan we could for the money. That was about six years ago.

The proposal in the Governor's two-year budget plan is to reduce the state's contribution from one-third to one-quarter of the cost of the insurance plan. That puts a two-year, \$25 million added burden on our retired teachers. We did what we were asked to do. We took a lesser plan with a promise that the state would contribute their one-third required share. I ask that the state continue to pay their agreed share.

Connecticut, like the rest of the country, is experiencing a teacher shortage crisis. In our state, there was a shortage of over 1,200 teachers this year. There is a serious problem recruiting and retaining good teachers. Putting a \$25 million additional burden on retired teachers isn't going to help the problem. Please don't change the cost share formula.