

Written Testimony

Of

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On behalf of Western Connecticut State University's Education Club

RE: HB 7273: AAC A Study of Internships and Student Teaching in College Environments

March 7, 2019

Western Connecticut State University's Education Club is writing in support of HB 7273, which would call for a study of internships and student teaching. WCSU's Education Club fully believes in this endeavor. At Western Connecticut State University's elementary education program, we have a year of student teaching called residency. In the first semester of senior year, we have Residency I for 3 credits and three other 3 credit classes, as well as one 1 credit class, for a total of 12 credits. We are expected to be in schools one full day and two half days each week. In the second semester, we are expected to be in the classroom every day for a full day, earning 6 credits and taking two 3 credit classes and one 1 credit class. Similarly, in the secondary education program, the second semester is for student teaching.

In addition to all of this, many students must also find time to fit in a job. Comparatively, many internships earned while working towards other degrees are paid. It is recommended that student teachers do not have a job; however, for many that is not plausible due to financial reasons. This could be because of tuition payments, bills, gas, and other financial charges that come about. Western Connecticut State University also has non-traditional students who are fully supporting themselves and are working 40-hour weeks at their jobs. This leaves only the time after night classes and on the weekends for a job. The problem is that this leaves minimal free time. While it works technically, it is not a healthy lifestyle for anyone. This impacts student teachers mentally and physically.

Student teaching is an exciting time for all student teachers; therefore they need to be making their best impressions. This cannot happen if they are burned out by the end of the week. Children need a lot of attention, and student teachers want to devote themselves to the profession. This is difficult when they are worried about a laundry list of other items. Student teachers may be trying to think about the assignments that are due the next day instead of critically thinking about their students. This could also lead to feeling overwhelmed and shutting down. No one wants to feel this way.

Student teachers are often also physically exhausted from the work they must complete. A typical day includes going to school to teach from 7:30am to 3:30pm, night class from 4:30pm to 7pm, and then possibly working from 8pm to 11pm. After that, students may have homework or lesson plans due the next day. They could also have to work on a Saturday or Sunday when it would be better for their health to sleep in. Western Connecticut State University also has non-traditional students who have children. This workload is not conducive to a happy productive lifestyle. It is imperative that teachers are modeling a healthy lifestyle, as children often look to us as role models.

In conclusion, student teaching should be allowed all of the time and energy it requires. Student teachers should not need to worry about our finances. As previously stated, financial worry takes away precious time from the classroom students. While we know this bill will not affect us until 2020, we want to lighten the load for the student teachers who come after us. We hope you consider this study, as we work very diligently for our students. This would enable us to give all the time and care that our classroom students need and free us of any financial worries. Thank you.