

Written Testimony of

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Submitted to the Labor Committee

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

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My name is Kristen Iadarola, and I am writing this testimony on behalf of the Future Teachers Organization at Southern Connecticut State University. Southern's Future Teachers Organization is dedicated to helping preservice teachers grow and develop not only personally but professionally. Being a part of this organization helps to prepare preservice teachers to ultimately reach the final step in their teacher preparation programs, which is student teaching and eventually a certification in their subject matter.

As someone who is currently completing my student teaching, I do recognize both the negatives and positives of the experience. First, it is something that every individual who is studying to become a teacher dreams about: the day you finally get to begin your full-time classroom experience. I have spent the last three-and-a-half years preparing for this moment, but now I understand why when you are preparing, everyone around you tells you that it truly is a full-time job. At the beginning of this experience, I had many hopes, fears, and aspirations, as well as many tears shed, challenges, and frustrations. However, not all of those positives and negatives were centered around things that were happening inside the classroom. A lot of the challenges I have faced were due to lack of financial resources, which, in turn, caused challenges in other areas of my life. When you begin student teaching, your supervisors, cooperating teachers, and seminar professor

express to you just how much work you must put into student teaching not only to be successful but to make sure that you learn as much as you can from someone who has more experience than you. However, the reality is that many of us have much more on our minds besides just student teaching. I currently am completing my student teaching, which is approximately equal to working 40-50 hours a week if all the work outside of school is taken into consideration. I work an additional six to twelve hours a week at a daycare, and I nanny on average once to twice a week, which varies anywhere from four to seven hours each time. Although I do not mind keeping myself busy, I believe that it is important for others who are not in the teaching profession to understand that if I didn't have to work additional hours outside of the school day, I would have more time to just focus on my student teaching practicum. This would include more time to do things such as grade papers, plan more thoroughly, and make sure that I am prepared for the next days and weeks to come. Lastly, I believe that if student teachers received a stipend, their mental health would benefit, because working in addition to student teaching most certainly has impacted the amount of self-care that I am able to give myself, which I believe is crucial during this time in our teaching careers.

I would encourage the completion of this study so that those who may not be in the teaching field are given the opportunity to understand the reality that student teachers face when they don't receive any financial assistance. Thank you for taking the time to consider this issue at hand, and I hope that you are able to recognize and understand why this is so important to current student teachers and those who are working so hard to get to their student teaching experience.

Southern's Future Teachers Organization Executive Board.