

**Connecticut Legislative Black & Puerto Rican Caucus**  
Public Forum  
Legislative Office Building  
February 19, 2019

**Testimony of Kristen Ann Record,**  
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2011 Connecticut Teacher of the Year  
Stratford Education Association Vice-President for Secondary Schools

Good afternoon, esteemed members of this caucus. My name is Kristen Record. I have lived in Bridgeport and taught in Stratford for the past 19 years. I am the 2011 CT Teacher of the Year.

For years, the end of August has always brought its familiar back to school rituals associated with the start of a new school year. By September, we are in full swing, and another predictable thing comes along in my life – seasonal allergies. Two years ago, however, I had the unfortunate experience of having my classroom flooded during a heavy summer rain storm. Everything had to come out of my room – literally everything - including the carpet in the room. It was a huge mess, but luckily everything was back in place by the start of school. But then something odd happened to me – no fall allergies. Imagine my shock as I slowly realized, it wasn't me that had been sick – it was my classroom. And if my room, with its 20-year-old carpet, was sick, probably every other room with that same carpeting was too - but I was the only one lucky enough to get it replaced. As the Vice President of the Stratford Education Association, I've become keenly aware over the years of just how sick our schools can become. During the winter, kids and teachers wear coats inside, and portable space heaters are used to bring classroom temperatures up above 60 degrees. In warm months, we are sometimes sent home early because the heat and humidity in our buildings are so awful. We have mold in our carpets and dust in our air vents. We are getting sick at school, so are our kids, and we need your help! We urge you to pass legislation that ensures and establishes healthy learning conditions conducive to successful teaching and learning for all students.