

Written Testimony of
Joe Celcis, Teacher,
Westhill High School, Stamford,
Before The Committee on Public Health
Regarding Raised House Bill No. 5431
An Act Concerning Indoor Air Quality In Schools

March 5, 2020

I am writing in support of HB 5431. My name is Joe Celcis. I am a teacher at Westhill High School in Stamford, Connecticut, and have been out of work since November 5, 2018, due to exposure to and subsequent illness from black mold and other adverse environmental factors in my classroom and the school building in general. I suffer from intense fibromyalgia, which is the result of my body being exposed for prolonged periods over the past ten plus years. I am allergic to molds, and this allergy has only intensified over the years. I am currently undergoing treatment that may last for years. In the meantime, I am unable to work and pursue the calling to which I have dedicated my life: the betterment of society by the enrichment of my students' lives through my teaching. I am also unable to fully engage in my daily activities in a normal and fruitful way. I am in constant varying levels of pain and suffer from intense bouts of brain fog and fatigue that sometimes leave me in bed for days at a time.

I feel that I am an unfair victim of what the work environment at Westhill has physically done to me over the years. My body cannot take it anymore. Thankfully, I have finally been properly informed and diagnosed about what I was unknowingly being exposed to for all this time. I feel like I have become a problem to be dealt with, not a loyal public servant of seventeen years in this district who was injured over time due to poor and negligent facilities management. I have been undeniably irreparably damaged and struggling with my health due to working conditions at my school. I have a strong dedication to the students in the city of Stamford and my profession. If it was not for the advocacy of the Stamford and Connecticut Education Associations, I am positive that I would have never gotten the treatment and protection that I deserved.

Please consider adding minimum and maximum temperatures for classrooms in your final bill. I appreciate your time and attention to this critical matter.