

Testimony of

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Before the

Education Committee

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Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of the caps on class sizes proposed in Senate Bill 1093, which would take an important step in ensuring that classrooms are places where students can learn, and educators can teach.

I am a proud kindergarten teacher. I am fortunate to work in a district where the agreed upon cap for Kindergarten through grade 2 students is 21. I can tell you that even with this cap, 21 students is a lot. I am also fortunate to work in a district which currently has classroom paraprofessionals in kindergarten for the duration of the school day. Again, managing the diverse amount of today's academic, behavioral and social needs is extremely challenging. Students come to kindergarten in Connecticut with a variety of backgrounds and knowledge. As pre-K is currently not required in the state and quite expensive for families to provide on their own, many come to my classroom with 'limited' skills. I use this term loosely as it is not the child's fault. It is simply not possible for some families to provide the foundation necessary to enter kindergarten. The Common Core standards which students are expected to acquire by the end of kindergarten is high. The fact that Connecticut is the only state in the nation to have students be 5 years old by January 1st does not help these students. Many parents then send their children to Kindergarten at a young age and sometimes without the foundational skills which would only ease their learning in Kindergarten. Having a smaller class size would assist teachers (not only kindergarten teachers but all teachers) in reaching the various needs and academic abilities of the students in a classroom. It would allow for more small group instruction which would be differentiated for each child's needs. It would allow a teacher to truly get to know his/her students and would allow the teacher to meet with students on a more regular basis. It truly just makes sense. There is a reason colleges are eager to brag or share their low student to faculty ratio. More faculty and fewer students means more personalized instruction. If this is true for college students, it must certainly be true for our

young learners. We are setting the foundation for their schooling careers. If young students know that their teacher truly understands what their academic, social and behavioral needs are, they will in all likelihood be able to grow as students and do their best learning. If state lawmakers can vote to approve free meals to all students for the remainder of this school year (I'm assuming because they understand students can't learn if they are hungry and they want to provide the best learning opportunity for students), then they can surely provide teachers with a smaller class size. This will help teachers more easily manage the multitude of responsibilities expected of them, which will in turn help the students in that teacher's classroom. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you would like to discuss further. I am happy and proud to discuss being a Connecticut teacher. It is an extremely rewarding career, but it is also quite challenging and a profession which I believe is often misunderstood.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

