

TESTIMONY OF ROBYN KAPLAN-CHO

CONNECTICUT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (CEA)

CONCERNING RAISED BILL 6557

AN ACT CONCERNING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

BEFORE THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MARCH 8, 2021

Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Robyn Kaplan-Cho, and I have been on staff with the Connecticut Education Association (CEA) representing teachers across the state of Connecticut for over 26 years.

I would like to express CEA's support for Sections 11 and 19 of raised bill 6557.

Section 11 proposes the establishment of a work group to review statutes related to bullying and safe school climate plans. There have many modifications to these statutes over the years, so it is appropriate to enlist a group of professionals to examine necessary changes. This will provide an opportunity for input from educators, parents, and students related to the implementation of the law as well as the use of restorative practices in schools.

Sec. 19 proposes the addition of at least one teacher selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees and medical and mental health personnel assigned to the school, to each school's statutorily required safe school climate committee. These committees examine acts of bullying as well as threats and harmful acts directed at members of the school community. These committees are well suited to analyze how to best address the needs of students who have experienced trauma. This bill ensures that the voices of teachers and trained mental health professionals will be an integral part of this discussion.

Thank you for your consideration.