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Testimony of

Donald E. Williams, Jr.

Connecticut Education Association

Before the

Education Committee

Re:

**H.B. No. 6617 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING AUTHORIZATION OF STATE GRANT
COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AND REVISIONS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING
PROJECTS STATUTES**

March 17, 2021

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

I am Donald Williams, Executive Director of the Connecticut Education Association. CEA represents active and retired educators from over 150 school districts in the State.

CEA supports HB 6617 and the inclusion of water filling stations in state school building projects. The use of reusable water bottles is a positive trend in our society. It promotes health by making it more convenient for students and staff to drink more water – something we all know is better for each of us. It greatly reduces the amount of plastic waste and pollution by eliminating the need for throw-away plastic water bottles. It also helps reduce the spread of germs from the old-fashioned drinking directly from water fountains. We support the inclusion of this provision.

Additionally, the issue of indoor air quality in schools remains a serious concern. Vastly fluctuating temperatures, along with poor ventilation and disrepair have resulted in schools infected with mold, airborne pathogens, and infestations that cause poor health and conditions not conducive to teaching and learning. The need for adequate ventilation and air filtration in our schools is even more pressing in light of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

CEA urges committee members to permit the full use of school construction bonding funds for HVAC inspection, repair, upgrades, and maintenance. Use of school bonding funds to update HVAC systems in our schools is long-overdue and will be a responsible way to correct this ongoing problem, now and in the future.

Thank you.