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*Testimony of*

***Melanie I. Kolek***

*Before the Judiciary Committee*

**HB 6797 An Act Concerning the Receipt of Workers' Compensation Benefits and the Provision of Medical Records in Workers' Compensation Matters**

*March 3, 2023*

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, and members of this esteemed committee, my name is Melanie I. Kolek. I am legal counsel for the Connecticut Education Association, proudly representing public school teachers across our state. A majority of my practice is before the Workers' Compensation Commission.

While we agree with most of the proposed language of this bill, we fully support the new language regarding the receipt of medical reports. We find this mandated time frame for responding to requests for medical reports critical in terms of representing injured teachers, more specifically in being able to appropriately represent them in their workers' compensation matters. Historically, because of delays in receiving medical reports from certain medical providers, our clients have suffered because lost wage claims were either denied and/or not supported, as we did not have those reports proving a diminished work capacity in time for the scheduled workers' compensation hearing.

We also support that this language would extend to providers not directly related to the health condition. This is important because reports from those providers are commonly requested by respondent-insurers in preparation for certain examinations that may be scheduled.

The delay in receipt of those reports delays the entire process.

This language would assist our injured workers considerably in the advancement of their cases as well as ensure the best use of administrative time and resources with the Workers' Compensation Commission.