

Testimony of

Diane Sirica

Pomperaug Educator

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 taught 6th grade science for 19 years. I didn't bat an eyelash if I have 20+ students. It was frustrating with lab setup and procuring materials, but the number of students did not impact my students or my teaching. Due to a decrease in numbers, I found myself starting my 20th year of teaching in 3rd grade. I had 17 students. The smallest class I had ever had in my career. I was able to provide each student so much personal attention via conferencing and small group instruction. Conferencing and small group instruction are the backbone of elementary education. After a successful first year in elementary school, I was met by a class of 23 third graders. At first, I thought I'm back to what I'm used to. I wasn't at all worried. After all, I spent the bulk of my career in the middle school teaching classes of about 25. Sadly, I learned what is possible in the middle school is not possible in elementary school. I had to deal with huge behavior problems due to the large class. When I couldn't get to everyone quickly enough, negative behaviors reared their ugly head. My students' learning suffered from not getting frequent enough conferencing and small group instruction. My students showed limited growth. The kids and I survived, but that's not what a good teacher wants. A good teacher wants growth and strong development. This year my class has 20 students. I am having a similar struggle reaching all my students' needs in a timely manner. 20+ students in third grade used to be manageable. Back in a time when all students read the same novel, wrote the same story prompt, did math problems one at a time whole class. But this is not the teaching of today. Today's teaching is more individualized meeting the needs of each child in your classroom, which is impossible in a class of 20+ in third grade. Third grade is a year of new learning and increased independence. It deserves to be taught in classes that are less than 20

like their K-2 peers. I urge you to look closely at numbers. Smaller classes produce more successful learners. And successful learners become our lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

