

Testimony of

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Before the

Education Committee

March 1, 2023

Dear 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.

As a high school English teacher, I have had a variety of class sizes and have seen firsthand how students themselves can flourish when they are in a smaller environment and can connect more with their peers. With smaller class sizes, there is more time and physical space for students to learn, explore, and build relationships. In several instances, I have had students in one course that has a larger class size and then again in another class with a significantly smaller class size. In the latter cases, I see students building stronger academic relationships—and friendships—with their peers in ways that are simply not facilitated by larger class sizes. When students are able to get to know their peers more deeply through a smaller number of students in the room, they are more likely to take the academic risks that allow for new learning to occur.

Smaller class sizes have also allowed me to better facilitate learning experiences for students by ensuring that I know each student as an individual, can incorporate their interests and background skills into new learning experiences, and can give more specific and timely feedback to students.

When operating under the set time constraints of a class period, teachers only have so much time to work with students individually. When we shift class sizes down, time per student is increased—which pays off for students and for teachers. As an English teacher, essay grading is a notorious part of the role; the difference of having a class of 25 students versus 30, for example, is significant in terms of the time I would have to spend both inside and outside of my

contract hours to provide feedback and grades for students. Multiplied across 5 classes, a difference of 5 students per class would reduce several hours of grading for me per essay (which occur several times a year). With smaller class sizes, I am able to provide more specific, individualized, and frequent support to students both inside the classroom and outside of it. Smaller class sizes, supported by the class size cap introduced in Senate Bill 1093, are an important step in ensuring a quality, equitable, and empowering education for Connecticut students. When students and teachers can work together in smaller learning environments, collaboration, feedback, and communication—all core components of quality learning experiences—thrive. Thank you for your time and consideration.

