HB-6439 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023 and Making Appropriations Thereafter

Senator Catherine A. Osten, Co-Chair, Representative Toni E. Walker, Co-Chair, Senator Craig Miller, Ranking Member, Representative Mike France, Ranking Member and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee

My name is David Scata, Executive Director of ConnCASE, ConnCASE represents over two hundred special education administrators in Connecticut. I am here today to ask the you not to freeze ECS funding as proposed in Governor Lamont's budget. I am asking the Committee to instead consider funding SB 948-An Act Addressing Education Funding and Racial Equity in Connecticut.

Though the General Assembly revised ECS funding that looked at student learning needs and community wealth for distribution, the full implementation of the change is over a ten-year period, adoption of SB 948 would greatly reduce that timeline.

The issue of equity in funding has been an issue that urban, priority, and rural districts have been grappling with for years. The components addressed in this bill, by increasing the present weights for both poverty and English Language Learners would provide greater and more equitable funding across Connecticut districts.

I have seen firsthand this past year how districts have addressed the learning needs of students. You can find one district provide in person learning four to five days per week, while others and in some cases an adjacent town, only offer hybrid or remote learning exclusively. The impact for students especially students with diverse learning needs has been devastating in so many cases.

One can only assume, that funding plays apart in how districts are addressing reopening of schools and in person learning.

Though I do have reservation of how the State will fund an additional $ 485 million, I believe it is worth exploring options to bring equitable funding to all children in Connecticut.

Thank you

David A Scata

ConnCASE, Executive Director