

Testimony of Kristen Ann Record,  
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2011 Connecticut Teacher of the Year  
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Before the State Board of Education  
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Good morning Co-chairs Taylor and López, Commissioner Wentzell, and esteemed members of the Board. My name is Kristen Record. I am a resident of the city of Bridgeport and have taught Physics at Bunnell High School in Stratford for 18 years. I am the Stratford Education Association's Vice-President for Secondary Schools and I am the 2011 Connecticut Teacher of the Year.

Last Wednesday, Governor Malloy's State of the State address coincided with a snow day, so I was able to watch on live television as he spoke on the theme of "Connecticut Fairness" and how he will support policy initiatives during the 2018 legislative session that are aimed at creating a fairer, more equitable state for Connecticut residents. This theme of "fairness" struck me as an ironic as I reflected upon the devastation inflicted upon the Stratford school district by the 2017 budget bill.

Imagine your elementary school no longer has a librarian and you no longer have a school counselor. Imagine your school-to-career pathway program in automotive technology gets completely eliminated. Imagine getting told you have to take a study hall instead of an academic class. Imagine getting 6 extra students added to your 1<sup>st</sup> grade class. *Is any of that fair?* That was the reality faced in Stratford after we lost nearly \$2.9 million in ECS funds for this school year. Stratford ranks 112 out of 163 municipalities in terms of wealth, but we ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the amount of ECS money lost. *Is that fair?* In order to avoid the devastation of up to 50 teachers getting laid off mid-year, all employees of the Stratford Board of Education agreed to take 2 furlough days – literally shutting down the entire school district, reducing the students' calendar from 182 to 180 days. Every adult and every child in the Stratford school district now bares the burden of the draconian ECS cuts inflicted upon us. I am losing two days of pay and my students are losing two days of education. *Is that fair?*

At the same time ECS funds were cut, the 2017 budget also eliminated the funding for the state's beginning teacher mentoring program – TEAM. I have been a TEAM mentor and a member of Stratford's TEAM Coordinating Committee since the programs inception. The elimination of TEAM funding has decimated our ability to support our new teachers and effectively help them become the best teachers they can be. *Is that fair?*

At a time when such pain is being inflicted upon town school systems, sending more money to charter schools is absolutely not fair. By continuing to expand a parallel system of schools that does not provide equal opportunity to all students, the children of my public school district have become victims of a system that is neither fair nor equitable. I urge you to reject charter school expansion and instead restore state funding to programs that help the children in Stratford's public schools.