*Testimony of*

**Kate Cummings**

*Before the*

Education Committee

*Re:*

**SB 363 AN ACT CONCERNING ASSORTED REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.**

March 11, 2024

Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty and distinguished members of the Education Committee.

I am Kate Cummings, a graduate student at Central Connecticut State University and a paraeducator in Madison. I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 363, which seeks to prohibit the use of edTPA as a requirement for teacher preparation programs.

The edTPA assessment presents significant challenges that are dissuading an unacceptably large number of teacher candidates from pursuing their careers. Its validity as a measure of teacher effectiveness is questionable, as it relies on a limited set of skills and behaviors, neglecting numerous other essential factors that contribute to a teacher's success in the classroom. EdTPA reduces the professionalism of teacher educators by giving a singular, outside, anonymous “evaluator” the power to overrule the decisions of qualified and experienced teacher educators and cooperating teachers. When this assessment is being evaluated, the raters are being paid $75 to grade and they never meet the candidate, the students, cooperating teacher, nor the university supervisor. EdTPA is not an authentic measure of student teachers’ capacities or readiness.

Furthermore, edTPA demands a substantial time commitment, which adds unnecessary and overwhelming stress to the process of becoming a teacher. It diverts attention away from essential tasks such as lesson planning, getting to know students and the school environment, attending meetings, completing coursework, meeting with advisors, and learning how to effectively teach in a classroom setting.

Even more concerning is the substantial financial burden that edTPA imposes on aspiring educators. The assessment costs at least $300, exacerbating the economic pressures already faced by teacher candidates who are often working full-time without compensation. This cost occurs in addition to other cost-burdens. Currently, candidates pay upwards of $800 to over $1000 in out-of-pocket in standardized testing fees for CT Foundations of Reading test ($139), Early Childhood exam ($139), Praxis Core ($150) / SAT, Praxis Content ($209), and edTPA ($300), just to earn their initial teaching license. Additionally, if a candidate does not pass all or part of the required standardized tests, they may have to pay to retake it each time. This financial burden discourages talented and well-qualified individuals from pursuing a career in teaching.

Therefore, I respectfully request your support for Senate Bill 363, which would lower obstacles for aspiring educators and help address the teacher shortage. By eliminating the use of edTPA, we can ensure that qualified and dedicated individuals are not prevented from entering the teaching profession.

It is imperative that we consider the detrimental impact of edTPA on aspiring educators. The teaching profession is already underpaid and understaffed, and edTPA only serves to set aspiring educators up for failure.

I urge you to give this matter your earnest consideration.