



October 18, 2017

Dear (legislator's name);

Together, the Connecticut Education Association (CEA) and the American Federation of Teachers Connecticut (AFT CT) represent over 55,000 member educators; we stand together, indisputably opposed to three proposals being considered that balance the state budget on the backs of students, teachers, and school support staff. They include a teacher tax, shifting state costs for teacher retirement plans onto local communities, and cutting much-needed education funding from our schools.

**1. Teacher Tax: We are unequivocally opposed. Teachers have fully funded their fair share of teacher retirement for decades.**

Their six percent of salary contribution combined with a state share of 4.56 percent would pay the full costs of teacher retirement. The cost of the unfunded liability—due to underfunding of the state's portion—should be the responsibility of the party at fault; the state. By comparison, state managers, commissioners, and those earning far more than teachers have for many years contributed two percent of their salary to their retirement—which is similar in benefits to teacher retirement—and this will now be increasing to four percent.

Teachers must not be punished with an increase in their payroll tax from six to eight percent when the payment they have made for decades has fully funded their fair share.

**2. Shift in responsibility for teacher retirement from the state to the towns: This is a misguided and destructive proposal and we are unequivocally opposed.**

The proposal—to charge cities and towns many millions of dollars for a responsibility the state assumed decades ago—will result in property tax increases, school budget cuts, or both. Making matters worse, Connecticut's communities of color and cities and towns struggling with high levels of poverty would bear the greatest burden of such a cost shift.

If generating additional revenue from wealthy taxpayers in wealthy communities to help balance the budget is the goal, there are more efficient and targeted ways of accomplishing it.

**3. Education Cost Sharing (ECS): We oppose a 'behind closed doors' process to create a new ECS formula, without input from educators and objective experts in fiscal policy. That approach has contributed to our present ECS problems.**

Rather than invite a new CCJEF lawsuit, a transparent and non-partisan process to create a

new ECS formula is in order. A copy of our CARES proposal—endorsed by the Coalition for Public Education and provided to you during the regular session—is attached.

We recognize the challenges you face in balancing the state budget; we cannot continue to allow our students, their futures — or the future of our state — to be shortchanged.

On behalf of our 55,000 member educators, we urge you and your colleagues to pass a responsible budget; one that invests in public education, keeps the state’s promise to teacher retirement without a cost shift to cities and towns, and does not impose a punishing tax on teachers.

Sincerely,



Sheila Cohen,  
CEA President



Jan Hochadel,  
AFT Connecticut President