

Remarks of Bob Brown
Social Studies Teacher
Southington High School, Southington

Before the State Dept. of Education and State Board of Education
Concerning the proposed changes to certification in Special Education

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Good afternoon, my name is Bob Brown and I am a social studies teacher at Southington High School. I have been teaching for 35 years. I hope and wish I could teach for 35 more years. I have a deep, deep passion for teaching young people. I believe it is a noble cause, and the single most important thing a democratic society does. As a local association leader, I have a serious concern with our attracting and retaining the most qualified teachers. I know we share that concern. These proposed certification changes, while perhaps seeming well intentioned, will NOT help us to do that. Now, we lose almost 50% of new teachers in their first 3 years. If we require special education teachers to have a master's degree before even entering the profession, who will take the risk and expense to get that degree, with the chance they will either not get a job or decide to leave within the first three years? And, to further make it difficult for them, they will not be required to do any student teaching, so they won't even find out if they can or want to pursue this noble profession. There are significant numbers of teachers who leave during student teaching--now we are

upping the risks, and, I'm afraid, in an attempt to attract the highest quality teachers, we will do the opposite. We will discourage people from even entering the profession. Plus, will budget strapped towns be eager to pay new special education teachers more with their already-obtained masters degrees? I think not. Please help us work together to find ways to attract and retain the highest quality educators we can. It is essential for our profession and our society. Thanks you.