

Remarks of Ronni Zinn

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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 Ronni S. Zinn and I am a special education teacher in Fairfield. I am writing to express my extreme opposition to the proposed changes in special education certification. Having received my B.S. in both Elementary and Exceptional Education, I know how crucial it is for teachers in this area to have the most comprehensive preparation possible, including at least two student teaching experiences. If only a master's degree is required, the breadth of preparation will be inherently diminished, and that will adversely affect the ability of new hires to effectively teach their students. That, in addition to the expanded roles of special educators, will definitely result in special education teachers being unprepared for their responsibilities. I can attest to the fact that my undergraduate education afforded me the opportunity to develop a broad range of skills, and the experiences I needed to practice and refine these skills. Under the proposed new requirements, the lack of opportunities for

teachers will have a deleterious effect on the end product: a properly prepared and experienced teacher. The idea that student teaching is expendable is unfathomable and unconscionable.

I further believe the astronomical cost of a master's degree will discourage young people from pursuing a career in special education which will further exacerbate a teacher shortage in this field. This entire action appears to be detrimental to those future professionals in special education, and more importantly to the students who deserve the best we can provide. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. I look forward to hearing that you have amended your proposals.