



March 10th, 2021

Representative Robert Sanchez, Chair
Senator Douglas McCrory, Chair
Senator Eric Berthel, Ranking Member
Representative Kathleen McCarty, Ranking Member
Education Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 3100
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Chairmen Sanchez and McCrory, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty and Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Rebecca Ruitto, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Chair of the Connecticut Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (CTAMFT). I currently reside in Portland, CT and am submitting testimony in support of HB 6557: An act concerning social and emotional learning.

CTAMFT currently serves over 1,000 Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) in the state of Connecticut. CTAMFT also works to make sure patients and students emotional and mental health needs in Connecticut are being supported.

MFTs have been clinically certified in Connecticut since 1983, clinically licensed since 1995, and school certified since 2007. In Connecticut, there are currently four COAMFTE accredited programs, and one (Central Connecticut State University) program that specifically offers a school certified track for MFTs. MFTs are also unique in that they are the only mental health profession with a systems-based and multidisciplinary history. This specific training makes them ideally qualified to work in collaborative environments. School MFTs are additionally trained to provide systemic interventions within the school setting; working with students, teachers, administrators and other school-based professionals to create resilient and healthy school environments for student learning and success.

HB 6557 would directly create supports for our students here in Connecticut that speaks to the very strengths school MFTs provide. As Connecticut continues to move through and recovery

from the current COVID-19 pandemic, we anticipate our students emotional and mental health needs will increase as well. CTAMFT supports the steps HB 6557 would create to help secure these needs are met. We would recommend the language in the bill be modified from “family therapists” to “marriage and family therapists” to accurately reflect our qualifications and professional titles.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I encourage you to strongly consider supporting HB 6557. Please feel free to contact me at chair@ctamft.org if you need additional information or have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Rebecca L Ruitto, LMFT

Rebecca L Ruitto, LMFT
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
Chair, CTAMFT