

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Hovey To Introduce Legislation To Revise In-School Suspension Law



State Representative DebraLee Hovey (R-Monroe, Newtown) will introduce legislation to revise the state's 2007 In-School Suspension law before the Legislature adjourns the 2008 Legislative Session on May 7. The measure will be submitted as an amendment to appropriate, education-based legislation, said Rep. Hovey, who serves as Ranking Member (House

Republican Leader) of the Legislature's Education Committee.

Public Act 07-66 requires student suspensions to be held on school grounds. Exemptions can be granted if school administration determines that the student poses a danger to persons or property or is too disruptive of the educational process. Prior law defined in-school suspension as exclusion from classroom activity, but not from school, for up to five consecutive days. The act extends this to 10 consecutive days. Under existing law, an exclusion from school privileges for more than 10 days constitutes an expulsion.

Many education officials have expressed concerns over this legislation, particularly the additional cost associated with hiring staff to monitor students serving their suspensions on school property. The legislation is scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2008. The legislation was approved in response to a number of school systems abusing out-of-school suspension provisions, said Rep. Hovey.

The amendment drafted by Rep. Hovey would target Connecticut school systems that abuse the use of out of school suspensions. However, schools that try to meet the educational needs of the majority of its students by keeping them in school during suspensions would be allowed to do so and use their judgment on the use of out of school suspensions.

"Because of my position on the Education Committee, I've received many emails from school leaders throughout the state voicing their concerns of the law that would go into effect with the next school year," said Rep. Hovey. "The amendment I will submit represents a viable way to address the issue and clearly sends the message that our schools should be educating all children."

Rep. Hovey added that schools cannot address the ongoing student achievement gap if those who most need classroom attention are removed from school buildings. She

pledged to follow up with additional legislation in the next legislative session that would require student assist teams become involved with students who are suspended for more than six days per year. The measure would be developed in conjunction with an educational intervention plan for these students.