

Todd Beard

Testimony in Support of House Bill 4625 – 4628

June 22, 2011

Good afternoon. My name is Todd Beard and as a member of StudentsFirst, a teacher, and a parent, I urge you to support House Bill 4625, House Bill 4626, House Bill 4627, and House Bill 4628.

I am able to inspire and lead students because I have a belief. In everything I do, I believe in challenging the status quo, putting the needs of my students above my own personal gains, and providing my students the best educational opportunities.

I work at the International Academy of Flint. We have been recognized by U.S. News and World Report as one of America's top High Schools. We are a Michigan Charter School of Excellence Award winner. Also, we are surrounded by crime, poverty, blight, and failure, but we are successful. We are successful, because our teachers are not there for the paycheck, job security, or benefits. They are there because they believe. It is important to attract people that believe what you believe. Our teachers believe that poor kids from Flint, Michigan can be successful, and that's the first step towards helping our students believe the same.

This bill puts forth needed reforms for Michigan's public education system. This bill is not about job security or due process rights; rather it is about structuring our public education system so student achievement is the number one objective and so that effective educators are able to thrive in a system that promotes this common goal.

A quality teacher at the head of the classroom doesn't just happen. The structures in place at a school, district, and state level make it happen. There must be a system in place that ensures we have quality teachers in every classroom that are accountable for their students' learning.

Under the current system, our children stand to lose some of our best teachers and those

teachers (those assets) will leave this State. They will probably go to one of the States that did win the Federal Race to the Top funds.

I understand this bill is hard for the critics to understand. But I believe it is the right thing to do.

What you do, proves what you believe. People don't support what you do, they support why you do it. I support this Bill, because I believe in supporting Michigan's future.

Thank you.