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## **Testimony of**

**Sharon Palmer, President**

**American Federation of Teachers**

### **Task Force to Study Converting Legislative Documents From Paper to Electronic Form**

**November 18, 2010**

AFT Connecticut is a diverse labor union representing 28,000 members in the private and public sectors. Our members are teachers, paraprofessionals, state employees, nurses, healthcare workers, janitors and municipal employees. We regularly encourage them to become involved in the legislative process by advocating for legislation that addresses concerns they may face in the workplace. Such participation can be daunting and intimidating for those who are not familiar with the Legislative Office Building and the way the General Assembly does business. For this reason, I urge this task force to keep in mind the concerns of regular citizens before choosing to fully eliminate the printing of legislative documents.

AFT Connecticut understands the importance of finding efficiencies and saving money in these difficult economic times. It seems an easy solution to just eliminate the printing of certain legislative documents, but I fear Legislative Management is not realistic about its ability to provide the same level of access, transparency and faith in government by referring citizens to the General Assembly's website.

Bills, amendments and fiscal notes have never been posted in a timely manner and there is no reason to believe that practice will change. By doing away with paper copies of these documents, visitors to the Legislative Office Building will be in the dark, even if they are able to access the Internet. Every session AFT Connecticut hosts at least one lobby day, inviting members to interact directly with legislators in Hartford. Without access to documents, their ability to intelligently and effectively communicate their concerns is severely compromised. I am concerned that regular people like our members will lose faith in state government and be discouraged from future participation in it.

I urge the task force to consider alternative ways to make the document printings more affordable before rubberstamping Legislative Management's decision to cut them entirely.

Thank you for your consideration.

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