

**TESTIMONY FOR PAT HALPIN-MURPHY
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS DIRECTOR
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS/PENNSYLVANIA (AFT/PA) House
Education Committee House Bill 1045 Wednesday, February 13, 2008**

Good morning, Chairman Roebuck, Chairman Stairs, Honorable Committee Members, friends and guests. I am Pat Halpin-Murphy, Director of Government Relations for AFT/PA. On behalf of president Ted Kirsch and our AFT affiliates across the state of Pennsylvania, I want to thank you for allowing me to give testimony today.

More than 60,000 teachers have attained National Board Certification, the teaching profession's highest credential, and because we believe that teaching is the heart of education, the single most important action we can take to promote quality teaching is to strengthen the skills, knowledge, professionalism and recognition of teachers.

As you have heard in previous testimony, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards sets rigorous standards, which are based on what teachers know and should be able to do. The process of reflective practice and deepened knowledge of content translates into more effective practice. The growing number of teachers meeting these high standards shows that teachers' commitment to professional growth is both deep and wide.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an educational reform that works!

Teachers who pursue National Board certification are engaged in rigorous and rewarding professional development, which helps reinforce their belief that they can make a difference in student learning by adapting instruction, and creating challenging and engaging lessons. Through National Board, they improve on the quality of their teaching.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an educational reform that works!

The National Board Certification process provides teachers with opportunities to reflect and improve their classroom practice and has a significant influence on teacher efficacy. Many National Board Certified Teachers have become school leaders through mentoring and by expanding their roles in overall school and professional activities. They have had a positive impact on student learning and school climate.

Research indicates that the practice of National Board Certified teachers has a greater impact on improving student learning than that of non National Board Certified teachers and support for this process can be found in every corner of the education community: school boards, parents, administrators, universities the NEA and the AFT, and AFT/PA.

Governor Rendell's commitment to National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, through his Pennsylvania Teaching Quality Initiative grant, is a welcomed incentive that has increased the number of candidates for National Board in Pennsylvania

Because we advocate educational reforms that work, AFT believes that House Bill 1045 will further integrate National Board Certification into Pennsylvania's educational system and with built-in legislative incentives to support the program, more of our teachers will seek these worthwhile credentials which will ultimately improve the quality of teaching and learning in many more schools across the Commonwealth.

House Bill 1045 will give stability and permanency to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in Pennsylvania and this will assure that our state government will provide funding for its continued implementation.

State and district policymakers must put the needs of our students first when they develop policies and allocate funding, and House Bill 1045 will help strengthen the teaching profession which will have a positive impact of the needs of our students.

Thank you for your time.