

January 31, 2017

**Testimony in Opposition to Frank Edelblut Nomination as Commissioner of  
the State of New Hampshire Dept. of Education**

Douglas Ley  
AFT-NH, President

Councilors,

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony and thank you for providing everyone here an opportunity to weigh in on this nomination.

As president of AFT-NH, I represent some 4000 education professionals, including teachers and para-educators. I mention those two groups because they form the largest portion of our membership and as education professionals they are required to be certified as competent to do their work and in many cases they must be highly qualified. Public education, filled with myriad of mandates and a maze of requirements and regulations, is a complex field. An individual charged with heading the NH Dept. of Education should be familiar with and have extensive experience in the educational arena. In fact, State statute (RSA 21-N:3) is quite clear: “The commissioner and deputy commissioner shall be qualified to hold their positions by reason of education and experience.” I am afraid that Mr. Edelblut, even with his success in business and his brief tenure in the NH House, does not reach this threshold of qualifications.

Mr. Edelblut has never served in any capacity in the public school systems of NH. He did not serve on the Education Committee in the NH House, nor has he ever served on a District School Board or even taken an active/visible interest in local educational issues, if election campaign media reports are to be believed. While personally educated in public schools, that is not sufficient to meet the statutory standard—otherwise, virtually everyone in this room would be qualified to serve as Commissioner. His post-secondary fields of endeavor were in business and in theology, not in any field related to education.

Choosing to home school his own children, he has had very little, if any, contact with local schools, whether public or even public charters, and one is left to wonder how he can carry out the statutory mandate to lead the Department in

- (a) Providing general supervision for elementary and secondary schools, teachers and administrators.
- (b) Providing a variety of educational services to schools and particular groups.
- (c) Providing vocational rehabilitation and social security disability determination services for persons with disabilities.

Our teachers and para-educators are required to be certified, and for good reason. The welfare of our children, the State's most precious resource, is at stake. It seems foolish to entrust their welfare and the future of the State to an individual who is undeniably accomplished, but who has no record of accomplishment, nay, virtually no record at all, in the area of education. It is for these reasons, that on behalf of the members of AFT-NH, I ask that you vote to reject the nomination of Frank Edelblut as Commissioner of the NH Department of Education.

Thank you, and I have written copies of my own testimony and also written testimony from Adam Marcoux, President of the Nashua Teachers' Union, for submission into the record.