

Testimony Date:
Submitted 3-12-07
Education CoBill Number:
7344,6754

March 12, 2007

HB 7344 AN ACT CONCERNING RECRUITMENT AND
RETENTION OF TEACHERSHB 6754 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECRUITMENT
OF MINORITY TEACHERS

My name is Arien Wilkerson and I am a Choice Program student at Plainville High School. I feel that it is very important to have more minority teachers in schools like mine.

I find that sometimes when a minority student speaks to a white teacher, the teacher doesn't always understand what we mean. I'm not trying to say that minorities speak in code, but sometimes it can be difficult to communicate our goals or our fears to a teacher that has not shared our experiences or is unfamiliar with the words we use or the ways we express ourselves.

When I first started out in the Plainville system, I admit it was rough. Everyone seemed ahead of me academically – even in kindergarten. I was scared. I didn't want to be seen as an unintelligent minority in an all non-minority school. I remember at times being picked on and called names, but I stayed strong in the end, and now I have many friends at school and feel more accepted.

But my transition would have been easier had there been minority teachers in the school. First, I would have had somewhere to turn and someone to stand up for me. Second, if the other kids and teachers already knew and accepted an African American teacher, they would likely have been supportive from the beginning and not be so quick to jump to conclusions about me and other minorities.

Thank you for your time.