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Testimony presented to the Education Committee supporting S.B. 1114: An act implementing the Governor's budget recommendations regarding education.

Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and distinguished members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 1114, An Act implementing the Governor's budget recommendations regarding education. My name is José Olavarría and I am a parent and also the principal of Pembroke Elementary School in Danbury, CT.

As an educator in the State of Connecticut, I applaud the commitment being proposed to support public education to enhance our ability to support the educational needs of our children. All too many times we talk about how our children need time and materials to learn and to become life long learners. With the passing of Senate Bill 1114 you will be allocating fiscal resources making it a real goal to accomplish. I further support the Governor's Early Childhood Initiative that will allow for more families to be eligible and have access to preschool programs. Sections 12-14 of the bill provides for an issue close to my heart and that is the recruitment of minorities by providing scholarship incentives for our minority students to enter our professional ranks.

Lastly, I see the most immediate attention that the bill addresses is the one-time grant that will help schools pay for textbooks and deferred maintenance. Again, without the appropriate tools made available to us we are hampered in the fulfillment of our educational charge and if our facilities are not maintained we cannot provide the most comfortable and nurturing environment for our children to learn in.

