

Supporting Testimony for SB-1114 an act implementing the Governor's
Education Plan

Good Afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and distinguished members of the Education Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to present testimony in support of Governor Rell's historic education plan. My name is Rita Ortiz, and I live in West Hartford, Ct.

There are many reasons to support the Governor's proposed Education plan including the immediate ECS funding increases that will positively impact every student in CT, the high school graduation plan and increased financial aid for college students.

As a mother of a high school freshman I am particularly in favor of Governor Rell's Education plan's proposed increase in accountability and the high school graduation exam requirements.

My son seems to come home with not nearly as much homework as I had; this past school break went without even a reading assignment. How is my son supposed to compete in a world where the technology allows companies to hire overseas employees with higher Math and Science skills? With the Governor's plan, public schools will no longer be able to just get by with the minimum requirements. Schools not meeting the requirements will be able to request assistance from the State helping them address and improve student achievement gaps and performance. Even the leadership of the school can be replaced if improvement isn't achieved which would be very hard to do under the current system.

In addition, giving school districts \$50 million to help purchase up to date school books and improve school facilities is crucial. My son's oldest copyright is the year 2000; however I know the priority school district's books are much older. With the Governor putting the emphasis on up-to-books and placing the focus on increasing Math and Science skills, I am more confident that my son will have a better chance to compete in an increasingly intense global market.

I am also scared to death of our upcoming college costs. Four years could cost us up to \$150,000 or more, which is more than the price of my home bought 10 years ago. Governor Rell's proposed increased of \$50 million over two years in student financial aid for both public and private colleges in CT gives me hope. Now my son will have the opportunity to apply for the best school for him, not just the one we'd be able to afford.

For these and other reasons I support Governor Rell's very forthright and extremely groundbreaking education plan. I urge your support in moving this important plan forward to help not only my son but all CT students. Thank you.