

Good afternoon, everyone.

My name is Milly Arciniegas and I am a resident of Hartford, a proud parent of two children ages 16 and 11 and am also the Hartford PTO Council President.

I have come here today to testify in favor of bill No. 6666, "AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER CERTIFICATION."

As I was writing this testimony I stopped for a minute and asked my 16 year old son if he has ever been taught by a minority teacher. His answer was "No." I was very moved to hear him say that because here is a child that wants to become a Math teacher when he grows up but never has seen a minority teacher in front of the classroom. I then asked him out of all of the teachers he has interacted with which one of them he connected with the most. He told me it was his eighth grade Math teacher.

I knew his eighth grade Math teacher very well and also knew that he was a Long-term substitute who had a Master Degree specializing in Math and Science. This particular Math teacher had a way of interacting with children and motivating them to take a liking to Math. The majority of the children who attended his class scored high on the CMT's and they also thought he was the best teacher ever. Because of the shortage of Math teachers in the Hartford Public school district this particular teacher was kept in the same position as a Long-Term Substitute for over six years. He is now currently working in the Hartford School system coaching a Math certified teacher.

The Praxis I exam is one of the biggest barriers in recruiting minority teachers. You have talented minority teacher candidates who have changed their careers to give back to their community by becoming a teacher and simply cannot overcome this obstacle. I have met very talented substitute teachers who miss the exam by 1 or 2 points and have taken the exam over 10 times to continue to fail by 1 or 2 points. Having these substitute teachers in the Hartford School system is a blessing because it is the closest we have gotten to having minority teachers in the classroom.

Another point I would like to make on behalf of parents across the Hartford School district is that we spend thousand and thousand of dollars every year on culture diversity training to train non-minority certified teachers understand and teach our children better and the last time we looked at the CMT results our schools are still in need of improvement. On behalf of the parents of the Hartford PTO Council we recommended along with supporting the bill to add the following:

- Waive the Praxis I for those individuals who have attained a Master's Degree (this is also done in New Hampshire)

and

- If an individual pursuing a certificate in teaching continues to fail the Praxis I exam by 1 or 2 points give them an alternative to taking a test. Such as more college course requirements.

Thank you for your time.