

11:30 27P
Late

Brenetta Henry
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Hartford CT 06112

Dear Legislators

My name is Brenetta Henry I am a Parent Grand Parent and the Tri-Chair of the Hartford W. Hartford Systems of Care also Legislative Chair for the systems of Care/AFCAMP as well as a Parent that sits on the Hartford Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee

I'm here today to speak on S. B. 197 an Act Concerning School Suspension. This law was passed in 2007 here we are in 2010 and just when it looks like the implementation of this law would finally happen we are right back where we started.

We know that as legislators are under tremendous political pressure from municipalities to delay implementation due to concerns about cost.

My concern is that because of the disproportionally in African American and Latino Special Ed Students make up the majority of students that are being suspended from school, to push this bill back we are looking for a rise in Juvenile Justice, DCF and the Department of Corrections Cases becoming a part of our youth and young adult lives.

As we know Connecticut did not manage to meet the Race to the Top Campaign thru the federal government. When you look at the Achievement Gap Along with the Suspensions and Disproportionally across systems we will never Rise to the Top. Please before you think about pushing this bill back our children needs you, their future and the knowledge they gain are in your hands every time one of our children gets suspended is time that could have been utilized in their learning process. Don't make us wait for something that should have happened 2 years ago the time to move on this is now.

In close I know first hand how it feels to be a parent with a child with special needs and the being suspended on a regular basis. It wasn't until I connected with AFCAMP and Legal Council and empowered myself to become educated that things had started working out. My son has graduated and about to start Community College in another state but my grandchildren are here in the State of Connecticut I don't want to repeat that cycle again.

Thank you
Brenetta Henry
Tri-Chair Harford W. Hartford System of Care