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Hartford Parent Organization Council

H.B. No. 5491

My name is Milly Arciniegas and I am a parent of two children ages 12 and 17. I am also the President of the Hartford Parent Organization Council, a coalition of 45 PTO's throughout the Hartford Public School System advocating for a high quality education for every child.

I have experienced first hand how parents including myself continue to struggle to be heard and be accepted as equal partners when providing our recommendations on improving low performing schools. Year after year we sit on the sidelines as we await the AYP scores provided by the State Department of Education only to be failed once again and for our recommendations not to be heard nor validated.

We could all sit around here and blame one another for these low performing schools, but the fact of the matter is, our children are failing at an alarming rate. And even though parents wish that they could be in those classrooms six or seven hours a day, the fact of the matter is, they have to go to work. So the question is we either continue to allow the status quo or give the parents equal power to do something about it.

The Hartford Parent Organization Council fully supports bill No. 5491 – An Act Concerning Certain School District Reforms To Reduce The Achievement Gap in Connecticut and especially "The "Parent Trigger" because it will give parents power equal to the power of the union and the school district and at the same time validate our input and increase parental involvement. At the end of the day, when children are failed within these low performing schools everyone loses.

Let us act now and send a message to all parties and Washington that CT is willing to do "whatever it takes" to ensure all children have access to high quality schools.

Thank you for your time.