

Testimony for the Record in Support of:

Testimony for State Public Hearing on 3/15/10 Regarding HB 5491: AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT REFORMS TO REDUCE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN CONNECTICUT & S.B. 440, "AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE PROGRAMS

I am submitting this testimony as a concerned parent, voter and taxpaying resident of Bridgeport. I join with other constituents, particularly parent leaders throughout our state to request our state representatives and senators support statewide education reform for all children. I salute the Black and Latino Caucus for their leadership in proposing this bill. I believe that we must stop failing our children, by continuing and in some instances beginning public school reform efforts to close the staggering achievement gap between African & Latino American students and their fellow students. It is important to note that in Bridgeport the reform movement includes The Bridgeport Partnership for Student Success that seeks increased literacy and numeracy; high quality schools in every neighborhood; high quality teachers and administrators in every school for every student; parent's right to choose a high quality school; accountability based on the use of solid data for student achievement; and an engaged and educated citizenry including parents that demand high quality education for all children. Our parents, superintendent, mayor, teachers, principals, board of education, service providers, business members, funders, advocates and some reform experts are joining together to insure that all of are students are successful and we do the reform work that is necessary to close and prevent further enlargement of the achievement gap in Bridgeport. In light of this although I fully support the spirit of HB 5491 I would amend the letter of the law to also include that the parent trigger only be used in those communities where there was not a parent approved community-wide reform effort and established strategy(s) to correct failing schools. Lastly, I must emphasize that I support traditional public school reform as well as the best practices of magnet and charter schools. I believe that all of these schools can and should provide high quality education for all students. I don't support efforts that would take resources from traditional public schools that are doing all that is fiscally possible and demonstrating positive improvements for students.

Respectfully Submitted,

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