

Testimony of Cristina Cavalliery  
Director of Common Ground High School,  
358 Springside Avenue, New Haven, CT 06515  
Testimony submitted to the Appropriations Committee  
March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Honorable Chairs, Members of the Appropriation Committee:

Towards the end of my eighth grade year, I was introduced to Common Ground. When I first saw it in the picture I thought I don't want to go there, but like every other child my parents made me. I went in my freshman year with a closed mind. All I kept thinking was I do not want to be here. But towards the end of my freshman year I noticed everything was very different from other schools I went to. Common Ground taught me many things I did not know about the environment. I did not know how bad air pollution could be for people. I did not know what bad shape this world is in until I started opening my mind towards it. In one of my classes called Environmental Justice I also noticed how much injustice there is in certain communities, and it made me realize something very important. I want to help change these situations. I want to help save this world with whatever is in my power to do so.

Common Ground has changed my life in many different ways and I couldn't be more thankful. Now that I am a junior I know that Common Ground can seriously use extra money because there is a lot of stuff we need. We need more after school programs so we can support students academically. After school activities can help students have fun and decide to stay in school rather than being on the streets. Also having more teachers could be really helpful. More teachers could provide students with more support in classes, and also more classes. We can also use the extra money for science equipment, sports equipment, and whatever else the school needs.

One last thing that came to my mind was: why are charter schools any different from any other schools? Charter schools are public just like the others, they only difference is that charter schools have a mission and funding is different. And some charter school are small like us. Even though we are a small school, you don't see us failing, you see us achieving more and more every day, trying harder everyday with whatever we have. We should not be treated any differently.

I support student-based funding to find charter schools fairly and sustainable.

Sincerely,

Cristina Cavalliery.