

**Christine Wright – Amistad Elm City High School
Appropriations Committee Hearing
March 24, 2011**

Good afternoon,

My name is Christine Wright and I want to thank you all for allowing me to speak at the Appropriations Committee hearing today. I am here to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 1195, An Act Concerning School Finance Reform.

I am proud to say that I am a scholar at Amistad – Elm City High School in New Haven. My high school refers me to as a scholar and I consider myself a scholar because we know that I can learn and grow and become a college graduate and a leader in my community. From the first day that I joined Amistad Academy Middle School in 5th grade, I was told what year I would graduate college: 2015. It's hard to believe that that was eight years ago, and now I am actually receiving college acceptance letters!

Senate Bill 1195 tries to set up a system that will result in fair funding for every public school student in the state. I think that makes a lot of sense. After all, why should I get less money to learn as public charter school student than a student in a traditional public school? Although Amistad-Elm City High is a a charter school, it is still a public school, and I am a public school student.

The fact that I have been able to go to an Achievement First school has made a huge difference in my life. I am proud to tell you that I have already been accepted to seven schools including Dartmouth, Spellman College, UCONN, University of Rochester, and Fairfield University. And I'm not the only one at my high school getting into amazing colleges, In fact, for the second year in a row, 100 % of seniors attending Amistad-Elm City have been accepted to a four-year college.

Being a part of the Amistad family and the Achievement First family has helped me transform into the student and the person that I am today. Academically, my math skills have improved dramatically. I used to struggle with math and now I am getting an A in AP Calculus. I have had the opportunity to take classes at Yale as a junior and attend summer programs at Carleton College in Minnesota. I have been visiting college campuses on school field trips since I was 12. Being a scholar at Amistad has made me an independent, responsible, hardworking and thoughtful person who believes she can accomplish anything. Amistad has given me an outstanding academic education and also character education that has prepared me for success in college and life.

I learned in school while working on one of the election campaigns this fall that ConnCAN conducted a survey of voters that showed that 91% of voters think that Connecticut needs a new, simple and fair state funding system. And that 75% of those voters agree that state funding should follow individual students to

whatever public school they chose. This includes magnet, charter, technical, and traditional public schools. Now, I may just be a kid, but I do hope you consider the difference a great charter school has made in my life. We need your help to continue these efforts to ensure that our schools have the funding they need to continue to function. We need your help so that kids like me grow into adults who are contributors to Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and this opportunity.