

**Talitha Coggins**  
**Testimony on Senate Bill 1195**

Chairwomen Harp and Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 1195, which I strongly support.

I am grateful to say that I have been able to take advantage of the kinds of excellent educational opportunities that are afforded to students in some of Connecticut's schools, but I am here to speak up for all of those parents who cannot say the same. My son is in an excellent public school, which happens to be a public charter school that we selected because we felt that it would meet his needs much better than his previous school did. But because of the deep inequities in our school funding system, too many parents cannot achieve such an opportunity for their child.

It's just not right that there is a question about whether or not all students in Connecticut will receive an excellent education. We all know it's possible to educate all children to a high standard that would make us proud – so why aren't we doing everything we can to make sure that happens?

We need to do a better job of investing in our public schools. That means providing support for children who need it, and getting the most we can out of the system. Giving parents options to find a school that works for their children is an excellent way to make our schools go a lot further toward their goal of providing a great education for all children. My son is now in a school that caters to his needs and holds him to a high standard, and there is nothing more precious that I could give him than a chance in a great school. Children are different and have different learning needs, but our school system is supposed to educate them all, no matter what they bring to the classroom. So how can we possibly protect a system that so clearly does not match education resources to students where they sit?

I consider myself very lucky to be one of the relatively few parents here in Connecticut that had a choice for my child in the public school system. A system that genuinely meets the needs of all children and helps them achieve their highest potential is long overdue, yet it's something we all say we want. The proposed student-based school funding system in Senate Bill 1195 would help bring us much closer to this dream. I very much hope you will pass this bill. Thank you.