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Martha Miller

Testimony on Senate Bill 1195

Chairs Senator Harp and Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 1195. My name is Martha Miller, and I am a mother from Hartford, Connecticut.

One of my children has autism, and we have had a difficult time finding a public school solution that works for him. I have found that most teachers are not equipped to handle his learning needs, even though he has a mild form of autism. The fact is, many parents are unable to supplement the services our children receive in school with costly extra services, so we rely on the public schools to provide what our children need, no matter what challenges they come to school with. I have gone into too many classrooms where students are just not being held to high standards and are not being taught in a way that works for them, and we just cannot stand for this any longer in Connecticut.

Our children need educational options so that no matter their learning needs, there will be a public school option that works for them. But the current system stands in the way of creating that range of options, when we should be doing absolutely everything we can to make sure all students get access to an excellent education that works for them. We are losing generations of children that we have just given up on, when our expectations are that they will just drop out or end up behind bars or dead at a young age. If that's the expectation we hold them to, why should they see anything different in their future?

It's time to turn the tables on the educational system, and put the focus where it belongs: on our children. We need to make sure that every choice we make as adults centers around making the most out of every child's educational experience, and that starts with a funding system that is equitable and allows students to make the choice that's right for them. Then we need to hold all children to the high expectations we know they can achieve, and give them the support they need to get there. The student-based funding system proposed in Senate Bill 1195 will help adults and children work together toward a brighter future where all students get the education they deserve, and I encourage you to pass this bill. Thank you for your time.