

**MARCH 5, 2012 TESTIMONY OF  
KIA LEVEY  
FOR THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
REGARDING  
RAISED HB 5352: AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING**

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Greeting Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and distinguished members of the Education Committee, this testimony is submitted by Kia Levey, graduate student at University of Connecticut School of Social Work and a parent advocating for successful educational opportunities and outcomes for all children and youth.

I am testifying in **support of Raised HB 5352**, which will promote the personalization of student learning

I am currently a Masters of Social Work Student at the Uconn. I have spent my time at the school researching and studying the many risk factors and systemic challenges that can serve as barriers to children and youth from having successful educational outcomes. Factors such as race, poverty, home and family stability, school climate, under-resourced schools and overextended teachers are just a few examples of the numerous hurdles that many children have to overcome just to get into the posture of learning and comprehension. Even if all of these environmental factors can be addressed there is still the matter of learning styles, possible learning disabilities, stages of development, socialization and curriculum relevance and appropriateness. If in fact **HB 5352** empowers and funds schools to create more specific learning opportunities and increase supports to improve educational success then this bill has my support.

I am more importantly testifying today as a parent. I am the mother of a five-year-old African American son who is due to enroll in kindergarten in the Fall of 2012 and to tell the truth I am scared to death. I am scared because report after report and study after study tells me that despite my best efforts, despite my own educational attainments, my African American son is still statistically at a disadvantage simply because of his gender and race - because antiquated education policies and culturally irrelevant curriculums are not designed to teach him by taking into consideration how he sees the world and how the world sees him.

**I support HB 5352 as long as it** will not be used as another way to label, stigmatize or deepen the existing gaps of achievement and attainment and if it will truly lead to creative and sustainable innovative learning and teaching programs that have the child's best interest at heart.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like additional information.

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