

SENATOR ANDRES AYALA, JR.

Twenty-third District

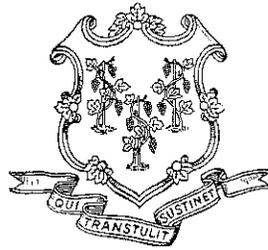
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February 20, 2013

Good morning Chair-Women Gerratana and Johnson and the members of the Public Health committee. I am here this morning to provide testimony on behalf of Proposed S.B. No. 366 An Act Requiring Licensed Social Workers And Counselors To Complete Continuing Education Coursework In Cultural Foundations. This bill is important to me because as we go forward in discussing the issue of mental health, it is important to ensure these people who we entrust with diagnosis and treatment be aware of cultural competencies to ensure the best possible diagnosis and treatment. This bill does not ask anything extra of these professionals. The only thing we ask is that of the 20 hours of continuing education these professionals are already required to take that one hour be dedicated to cultural competencies. As our population continues to become more diverse, it is important to ensure that the individuals who are providing treatment understand the person they are consulting with. This bill will provide for a more qualified person who is able to take into account the cultural nuances a person may have to be able to deliver better services. I understand there may already be some course work which is done but as we require this class of worker to continue to expand upon his/her knowledge then we should also expect for them to expand beyond just a course which may or may not provide everything they may need to know. As an educator in the Bridgeport School System for twenty years I know how valuable my knowledge in cultural competencies has served me. It is important that these professionals continue to expand their minds and use the acquired knowledge to better serve a diverse population. If I can be of any other service or answer any other questions please feel free to ask me or contact my office.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andres Ayala