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Testimony of
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75th District - Waterbury

Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee
February 25, 2014

Senator Cassano, Representative Willis, Senator Boucher, Representative Legeyt and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in regards to HB 5129: An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for the Greater Waterbury YMCA for an After-School and Evening College Preparation Initiative.

As Parks and Recreation Director for the city of Waterbury for over 20 years, as well as an educator and community leader I have seen an absolute disconnect between higher education and high school in regards to student preparation in overcoming students' remedial abilities. Over the past 10 years we have seen several educational reforms in K-12, however most education reform we have seen has addressed children in the lower grades. In our current education reform, again there is no specific initiative to assist students entering grade 11 in regards to mathematics, English and reading as it pertains to their ability to overcome an entry level college exam.

According to the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL), the number of high school students enrolled in college is on the rise, however many students discover upon entry into college that they do not meet requirements to enter mainstream courses, and are placed in remedial courses. Thereafter this becomes a detour from college level courses and becomes costly in terms of both time and money. "Remediation is costly for states to provide and for students to take. Strong American Schools estimates the costs of remedial education to states and students at around \$2.3 billion each year." (<http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/improving-college-completion-reforming-remedial.aspx>)

Thus, it is my belief that this proposed legislation will provide additional resources for students entering their junior year in high school, so they are given the support they need to overcome some of their deficiencies in reading, writing and mathematics. The program design will be to enhance the cohesiveness between the local board of educations and higher education using these external agencies to implement the proposed strategy.

In closing, I would like to add that it is my hope that this proposal can be altered to include other organizations, including the Junior Republic, New Opportunities, and Waterbury Youth Services.

I urge you to support this proposal.

Thank you for your time.

OLR provides the following:

You asked for some statistics related to minority student remediation rates for your hearing testimony on HB 5129, An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for Greater Waterbury YMCA for an After-School and Evening College Preparation Initiative. I have found the following statistics, along with their online sources:

National Council of State Legislatures (Hot Topics in Higher Education: Reforming Remedial Education: Fast Facts)

(<http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/improving-college-completion-reforming-remedial.aspx>)

- Low-income, Hispanic and African-American students are more likely to need remediation than their wealthier, white peers.
- Forty-one percent of Hispanic students and 42 percent of African-American students require remediation, compared to 31 percent of white students.
- Students are not testing at college-ready levels on national assessments. Only 25 percent of students who took the ACT met the test's readiness benchmarks in all four subjects (English, reading, math and science) in 2012. A mere 5 percent of African-Americans and 13 percent of Hispanics met the readiness benchmarks in all four subjects.

National Center for Education Statistics, January 2013 (First-year Undergraduate Remedial Coursetaking: 1999-2000, 2003-04, 2007-08)

(<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013013.pdf>)

- In the 1999-2000 school years, about 26 percent of first-year undergraduate in colleges and universities indicated they took remedial courses. By the 2003-04 academic year, only 19 percent said they did. A slight uptick, to 20 percent, occurred between 2007 and 2008.
- Students of color are overrepresented in these basic-skills courses. The race and ethnicity of participation rates for the 2007-08 academic year were:
 - Whites: 19.9 percent
 - African-Americans: 30.2 percent
 - Hispanics: 29 percent
 - Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders: 22.5 percent
 - Two or more races: 27.5 percent

National Journal (The Next America – Education 2012: “Fewer Students Report Taking Remedial Courses; Minority Numbers Still Worrisome”)

(<http://www.nationaljournal.com/thenextamerica/education/fewer-students-report-taking-remedial-courses-minority-numbers-still-worrisome-20130107>)

- A 2011 College Board study noted that 47.3 percent of blacks, 45.1 percent of Hispanics, and 43.9 percent of Native Americans took brush-up coursework.

Our Piece of the Pie

(http://www.opp.org/docs/PathwaysCollegeStrategies_StudentSuccess.pdf)

- Complete College America reports that almost 50 percent of students entering two-year colleges are required to take remedial courses. This number is even higher for minority and low-income students. In fact, over 67 percent of African-American students, 58 percent of Hispanic students, and 64 percent of low-income students pursuing a two-year degree require remediation. (Source: Complete College America. 2012. Remediation: Higher Education's Bridge to Nowhere.)

Program Review and Investigation Committee of the General Assembly, 2010

(http://www.cga.ct.gov/2009/pridata/Presentations/Presentation_to_HED_College_Remediation_Forum_01-28-2010.pdf)

- This 2010 presentation contains data to answer the question “Why are CT students unprepared for college?” Pages 12-14 contain data based on income, gender, and race.