

TYISHA TOMS
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Good evening. My name is Tyisha Toms and I am a resident and parent of two daughters - 1 who attended a Bridgeport magnet school and the other who currently attends the same magnet school.

I'm here to testify in support of raised bill no. 1096 because the rhetoric about the effectiveness of charters school is inaccurate.

The NAACP approved a resolution against Charter Schools and in support of our true public schools in 2010. The resolution cites a study by the Center for Research in Educational Outcomes of charter schools in 15 states and D.C. that confirmed that only 17% of charter school students in a study outperformed their peers, while 46% performed no better and 37% performed worse.

Similar outcomes can be found in Bridgeport, when charter schools are compared to magnets schools (which are also lottery based) all 4 Bridgeport elementary magnet schools outperform the state charter schools located in Bridgeport. The state-wide charter school plan proposed by raised bill no. 1096 provides a mechanism for the legislature to look beyond the rhetoric of the charter school advocates and into the actual facts about the performance of charters school. I believe that the results will show that Connecticut, like the NAACP, should focus its attention, funding and policy advocacy on improving existing, low performing public schools.

All the current charter schools located in Bridgeport significantly under serve children that qualify for free/reduced price lunch which is important to know because the number one indicator of a child's academic success is their socio-economic status. Although both the traditional Bridgeport public and magnet schools serve the same percentage of students that qualify for free/reduced lunch at 99%, the charter schools only serve between 69-85% of students that qualify for free/reduced price lunch.

Approximately 6,000 students applied to gain entry to our high performing magnet schools last Spring with less than 1,000 being accepted through the lottery. Over 5,000 students were placed on a waiting list with each student being counted just once. Charter Schools claim to have 1,200 students on waiting lists, however what they don't share is that if a child applies to three different charter schools, they are counted three separate times. This clearly demonstrates that Bridgeport parents overwhelmingly want expanded magnet school options, not charter schools.

Therefore I strongly urge the legislature to support and pass this bill.

Thank you for your time.