

Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education  
Public Hearing: Governor's Proposed Budget  
2/16/2016

Good evening Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today.

My name is Carly Wanner-Hyde from Newington, and I go to Newington High School. I am here to talk about my experience in CRILA, the Capitol Region Interdistrict Leadership Academy, and I would just like to start by saying that CRILA has helped shape me to be the confident, responsible leader that I am today. As I stand here, I am surrounded by my CRILA-mates, all of whom are some of the most trustworthy, kind hearted, most intelligent people I have ever had the pleasure to meet and get to know. I would never have gotten the chance had it not been for CRILA. It is easy to see the diversity between us. We come from different towns, different backgrounds, different lives. But we all share one thing: a passion to learn, lead and help others.

When we went to the Outward Bound School of Colorado this summer, I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. Adventure? Well, yes. Difficulty? Most likely. Shortness of breath from being in the highest point in Colorado? Of course. But I wasn't expecting the courage I gained. I wasn't expecting the bonds I created with my group. I wasn't expecting the feelings of utmost respect for my peers who conquered their fear of heights while rappelling from a rock face, or their apprehension of being in the mountains for three days when their closest experience to it was walking a paved path in the woods. I got to experience firsthand the growth of a leader and the importance of a team. Without each member of our group going above and beyond just pulling their own weight, we wouldn't have had the success of summiting a thirteen thousand foot mountain or helping each other to be the best possible leader that they could be.

What is possibly one of the clearest memories I have of the trip is our rock climbing excursion. After a lesson on how to belay a climber, we went off to one of the thirteen different sections of the rock. What was most profound about this experience was the feeling of putting my life into someone else's hands for the entire span of the climb, and on the flip-side when I was belaying, being responsible for someone else's life. It's amazing how quickly you trust someone who's completely supporting you, emotionally and physically, as you scale a vertical rock. There were times where I had to let go of the rock face with one hand and use all of my strength to push myself up on the request of my groupmates who could see a hand hold that I could not. It was scary, but I knew that I had one hundred percent of the support from everyone below me. We fed off of each other's energy and passion, and by the end of the day, we had a pair of climbers who scaled the rock face blindfolded and with their legs tied together.

CRILA has opened my eyes to different views and ideas, all of which came from my CRILA-mates. My experience has helped me become a much stronger leader and a better human being. I have an awareness of the world and people around me that I

didn't have before. After being part of such an amazing group, I want other young leaders to be able to partake in such an experience.

CRILA is an interdistrict grant funded through the State Department of Education that helps to promote racial integration. This past year, it was unexpectedly defunded after 12 successful years. My hope is that CRILA continues for years to come and that your small taste of what we stand for convinces you to reinstate the grant so that future teens can have this opportunity. Please help restore the funding for this very important program. Thank you for your time.