



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Office of Higher Education

Testimony

by

Jane A. Ciarleglio

Executive Director, Office of Higher Education

submitted to the

Education Committee

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Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, Senator Winfield, Representative Sanchez, Senator Boucher, Representative Lavielle, and distinguished members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding H.B. No. 5470 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A PILOT PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL INTERESTED IN PURSUING A COLLEGE DEGREE IN EDUCATION. This Act proposes to establish a teacher pathways pilot program to encourage and recruit minority high school students to pursue a career in education. We are pleased to share information with you regarding a program with similar goals known as the Minority Teacher incentive Grant Program.

Encouraging minority students to become teachers in the State of Connecticut is a critical step in closing the achievement gap as well as to attracting more minority educators who make up just seven percent of our teaching workforce and less than 10 percent of those enrolled in our teacher preparation programs. Since 1999, the Office of Higher Education has supported minority students becoming teachers through the Minority Teacher Incentive Grant Program (MTIP). MTIP awards minority college students a \$5,000 a year grant for each of their last two years of enrollment in a teacher preparation program. Once students graduate and become teachers in Connecticut public schools, they then receive up to \$2,500 a year, for four (4) years, to help pay down any student loan debt they incurred while in college. Since the inception of this program, Minority Teacher Incentive grants and loan stipends have been awarded to 599

individuals, of whom 25 percent had attended a community college. On average, this program serves 52 new participants each year; at least 297 recipients have gone on to teach in Connecticut public schools including our urban areas. Within its limited funds, the Minority Teacher Incentive Program has helped to diversify our teaching profession, and encourage those who might not have otherwise considered a teaching career or been able to afford a college education. Any additional efforts to recruit minorities to the teaching profession are laudable.

Thank you.