

Good afternoon/evening Chairs and members of the committee. My name is Lisa Cordova, and I teach Kindergarten grade for CREC and I am also the President of the CREC Education Association. I was born in Hartford and attended Hartford Public Schools.

*I am here to speak about [S.B. No. 455](#) (RAISED) EDUCATION. 'AN ACT CONCERNING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.*

CREC- EA and CREC Administration acknowledge how extremely important it is to recruit and retain minority teachers in our RESC. Our diverse student population deserves to have educators as diverse as they are. That is why we are collaborating to create a minority teacher certification program. We believe that it is imperative to attract, certify and employ teachers who are from underrepresented minority groups to teach in the Hartford area. Our program will market to recent college graduates who have settled back or have always resided in Hartford and did not pursue education certification during their undergraduate studies. This program includes a full time job with benefits as a classroom assistant for the first academic year and then full employment as a teacher in year two. The candidates will be paired with a master teacher from CREC's EA membership for the first two years of the program. The first year they will serve in the classroom of that master teacher and the second year they will be paired with a Master teacher in their assigned school. Candidates will take courses for two full summers and after school during the academic year. The program is not affiliated with a college or university and certification is granted directly by the State Department of Education.

Having educators that are well trained is essential to the classroom learning environment. We do not believe in lowering the standards for people of color. Quite honestly, I personally feel that is insulting. Is there cultural bias on the assessments? Yes there is. To address this we have created a system to accept candidates who may have been hindered by institutional barriers. But we believe in raising our candidates up to meet or even exceed the standards. It is our expectation that these candidates will be fully prepared to meet the current standards of certification when they graduate from our program. We have a concern that a lowered bar creates a second, less qualified tier of teacher certification, that will be disproportionately deployed in area most in need of well-trained teachers.

Our team is creating a core curriculum which includes teaching in a diverse educational setting and learning all of the pedagogy that will make them successful educators. Our preparation program will collaborate with expert practitioners from CREC to identify challenges and key practices to address the challenges. CREC Administration and CREC-EA will work together to identify veteran teachers who may serve as effective mentors or master teachers who are not only familiar with the challenges but are also experts in the practices identified to overcome those challenges. On the job learning cannot be replaced by preservice academic content, pedagogy, or clinical experiences. As such, we will provide teacher preparation course experiences that target the identified challenges while building opportunities for teachers to collaborate with each other to grow as educational leaders. This will naturally create a welcoming supportive environment for all of our candidates.

It is our hope that this will make the minority candidate succeed and want to flourish as an educator with CREC for many years.