Good evening Chairwoman Walker, Chairwoman Osten, Ranking Member Lavielle, Ranking Member Formica and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Ondrea Moore. I am a member of Faith Acts for Education and a constituent of Representative Ezequiel Santiago who is a member of this committee. I’m here to support House Bill 7148 and ask you to invest even more in Bridgeport.

First and foremost, I am a concerned parent of a high school student. Bridgeport has been underfunded for years. Due to underfunding, literacy coaches and math coaches were eliminated. They played a vital part in helping our children to succeed in excellence.

State test scores show that our Bridgeport children are 10% less proficient in math and 23% less proficient in reading. Life lessons in this day and time require reading and math for almost any job. If our children can’t read, how can they fill out college applications? We are setting our children up for failure and prison. My daughter, who is now an 11th grader at Fairchild Wheeler, which I fought to get her into after Bassick High School wasn’t giving her the education she deserved due to lack of funding.

Guidance Counselors were eliminated. Home School Coordinators eliminated. WHY? So the state can save money, give money to other towns, and in the meantime our children are dropping out of school like sprayed flies because they have no one to listen to their problems. Staff kids confided in were taken out of their lives.

When my child attended Bassick High School, I remember in the 9th grade, she called me on her cell phone during what was supposed to be class time. Imagine my expression. She said the math teacher got up and walked out classroom. He stated Bassick kids are unteachable and the school has no sense of direction. The Principal at the time was unaware. Imagine my expression even more. No counselors were available due to lack of funding so kids did whatever they wanted.

Let’s look at a couple things. The formula is supposed to be calculated by student data and town data, and it’s supposed to make funding fair across the state whether you live in a wealthy district or a low-income district. Yet, Westport as an example gets plenty of funding. Their population is only 26,000, but they spend more on education each year. Bridgeport has about 147,000 people and New Haven 130,000 people, but spend less on education because they don’t receive what they need from the state. It seems to me, the formula needs to be reevaluated. Where does the truth lie? The formula is also calculated by low-income student enrollment. Most urban schools contain at least 80% of low-income students. The average income for a low-income household is 12,000-23,000. Most Parents work for $10.10 an hour. So on that level, our Bridgeport families are being cheated as well. We need equitable funding, so our kids are prepared to make more than their parents do.

For every student enrolled, urban school district students receive at least $2,226 less than suburban schools, which are often smaller. So what formula are we really using? Please help our children in getting the education they deserve. All children deserve equal education, especially in this day and time. Final example: (show demographics) Bridgeport Public Schools have around 21,000 students and 1500
teachers, New Haven around 20,000 with 1800 teachers, Hartford 20,000 students with over 3,000 teachers. We are serving the same amount of kids but have less educators because of lack of funding.

Thank you Governor Lamont for proposing an increase to funding for Bridgeport, CT. But we need so much more. I'm asking you to just dig little deeper and let your compassion for our students begin to overflow. Let God speak to your hearts. The same way you fund other cities, such as Hartford and New Haven, I'm asking from bottom of my heart to fund Bridgeport the same way. Thank you.