Good Evening members of the appropriations committee,

My name is Claudia Phillips, I am a Bridgeport resident, mother of three children, one a junior at Amistad High School and two daughters graduates of Achievement First Amistad High School, current sophomores at Boston College and Bucknell University.

With the recent elections for a new governor I was excited to support a man that has been very successful in business and has a solid vision for the changes we need to move forward as a strong state.

However when it comes to education funding, I find myself increasingly worried, especially when I learned that children like mine attending public charter schools, not only had remained underfunded in this budget, receiving less than what the state has determined it costs to educated a child.

In addition, our schools are not only faced with the enormous challenge of closing the education gap in our communities but they also have to struggle to fulfill their financial obligations with less money in order to keep the doors of these high performing schools open.

This gives me so much pause.... And the real question here for this committee to ponder, is why high performing public charter schools continue to underfund in our State, because to a parent like me, this encourages an oppressive system designed to keep our children stagnant lost in a failing system; and to then learn that Governor Lamont had rightfully determined that children in cities like Bridgeport would have additional weight added, which will result in additional resources for their education, but to find that yet
again our sons and daughters attending public charter schools would not be part of the new weight measure is simple outrageous and unacceptable. But this seems to be very much a trend, and trend that parents like me will not accept and continue to fight against.

We are not asking for a hand out we are asking for a hand up, fund us equally and treat our schools with the respect and recognition they deserve for the outstanding work they continue to do for the children they serve.

To finalize I will not be part or participant with any individual and organization that wants to create division in my community. Our fight is not an us public charters versus them public traditional schools. We parents advocate for all schools to be fully and equitably funded, but please understand that will be not stand idle while our kids who already face enormous challenges continue to receive less funding when they should in fact be celebrated and fully supported for their accomplishment in our public charter schools!

Thank you for your time.

Claudia Phillips