Good Afternoon members of the committee and thank you for the opportunity to present testimony. My name is Isabella Phillips I am an Alumni of Amistad High School, currently a sophomore at Boston College.

I thought about what I could say that would be so compelling that it would move each and everyone of you to take action on behalf on children and youth that look like me and happen to live in a city that while rich in culture is poor in resources to serve its people particularly when it come to education. Therefore, I would like you to know that we are not just a statistic, know that myself and my peers who live in cities like Bridgeport, have dreams and a vision for our future...

But let’s talk about the walls that are built around us to keep us in a broken state, for example, I had the privilege to of attending a public charter school that has been underfunded from the day it opened its doors in my community and yet this very school has delivered year after year on the promise they made to people like my Mother and Father; that they would get kids like me to and through to college no matter the challenges!

The wall I am talking about is the systemic underfunding of quality school options, like our public charters and the lack of leadership to enact the changes needed to close the achievement gap. I do not have an us versus them mentality when it comes to traditional public school and public charters schools... we are one community, individuals and organizations need to stop trying to pin us against one another, again we are one community and us such we should be funded fully and equally.

I need you who are tasked to fight and make decisions for us ... to ensure that you make those decisions as if you were making them for your own sons and daughters. You, undoubtedly make choices that would give them the best opportunities.... That is, what our parent did for us when they filled out the lottery form, praying that we would get in, you, can’t continue to punish us, and them for wanting what you yourself want for your OWN ...

Fund us equally, include us in the new weight measures so that students like me will receive the resources they desperately need.

Regards,

Isabella Phillips

Boston College Class of 2021