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Testimony of Karen Chance
Danbury High School

in support of

**S.B. 956 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL
COUNSELOR PROGRAM.**

Education Committee- March 6, 2019

State Representative Richard A. Smith, State Senator Julie Kushner, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, my name is Karen Chance and I am a School Counselor in Danbury Public School District. Thank you for the opportunity to offer **testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 956- AN ACT CONCERNING A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELOR PROGRAM.**

As you know, currently, there are no requirements for school counseling programs to be implemented at any level in Connecticut school districts. Fewer than 25% of Connecticut's elementary school children have access to school counselors and comprehensive school counseling programming. Children are our greatest assets. Their future should be of primary concern. I believe it is imperative that this bill pass especially with the rise of school shootings, overall student anxiety, suicide and attempted suicide, and less family support as parents and guardians work more to make ends meet.

Not only should Bill 956 take precedent but Connecticut should be more in line with the Connecticut School Counselor Association ensuring that all students have access to a program that provides academic, social-emotional and post-secondary and career readiness programming by a certified school counselor with adequate training and a caseload of no more than 250 students. Connecticut is rich in diversity and along with this comes the added need for special attention to the challenges that it brings such as the need to address achievement gaps, respectful assimilation, DACA and non-documented students, and cultural sensitivity just to name a few. I can tell you as a counselor at Danbury High School with a caseload of over 300 students, it is not always an easy task.

This bill is a vital and a needed step in the right direction to be proactive and not just reactive with all our students. I would also ask that you amend the underlying bill to include the Connecticut School Counselor Association proposal to also have the State Board of Education adopt guidelines and recommendations for appropriate student-to-school counselor ratios and funding to increase access to student support services.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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