Testimony of Curtis Darragh IV  
School Counselor, Westside Middle School Academy, Danbury Public Schools  
in support of  
S.B. 956 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELOR PROGRAM. Education Committee - March 6, 2019

Dear Legislators for the State of Connecticut:  
Mr. Arconti, Ms. Kushner, Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Murphy and Ms. Hayes, and esteemed members of the Education Committee.

Good Afternoon,  
My name is Curtis Darragh IV, and I am a middle school counselor at Westside Middle School Academy, in the Danbury Public Schools. I am also a part of the CT school counseling association governors relations committee. I am in full support of S.B. 956 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELOR PROGRAM. The bill addresses guidelines to ensure that all students in the state of Connecticut have access to a program that teaches, social-emotional, academic and college-career readiness and to be taught by a certified school counselor. Right now, there are no requirements for school counseling programs to be implemented in K-12 public schools across Connecticut. Less that twenty-five percent of our elementary school children even have access to a school counselor on site.

I’ve been invested in the world of school counseling for nine years. My work with teaching and advising students to make insightful decisions when it comes to making the right choice or being the better person, has enriched students’ lives in their social and emotional well-being. With a comprehensive model in the state of Connecticut we can achieve better, do better and be better, by doing right for our students. When we work together to implement programs across the state, we will see a change in our student’s mental health. Being emotionally healthy will connect students to engagement in schools when it comes to social and academic surroundings. My current caseload is 320 students. Although I try my best day in and day out to provide individual and group counseling related services, to those students in need, I am not getting to every child in that building or creating a relationship with all students. Every student should feel welcome and comfortable to find and seek a trusted adult in the building. With educational demands increasing every year, it is becoming increasingly difficult to be able to reach all students.

I would 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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