

Maria Matos
Danbury CT
HB 6616

Hello my name is Maria Matos. My entire life I have been fighting to bring about more educational opportunities and equity to our community. When I moved to Danbury I immediately began working with various organizations to ensure that our latino population had access to resources and opportunities to get ahead.

I joined the movement to bring a charter school to Danbury after I saw first hand the impact the lack of Latino teachers and the overcrowding of our schools had on my own daughter. My daughter is a product of a school system where she barely ever had teachers and administrators that looked like her. I personally met latino professionals who had to work in other cities since they couldn't work in our public schools.

I began to support a charter school that would address that. That would bring more equity to our community and end the systemic racism that has been so prevalent in our city. After we finally received our charter our legislators decided that they would do everything in their power to block us. We have now been fighting for over three years to open our school that has been left without the funds it needs.

It is not fair to deny an entire community the school we so desperately need. I do want to say thanks to the Black and Puerto Rican caucus for listening to our voices and for allowing us the opportunity to be truly represented. I don't know what we would have

done without your support. I would like to especially thank Representative Bobby Sanchez for coming to Danbury and meeting us and for his kindness and understanding.

I am here to support the house bill 6616. I think it will finally be a fair system for the charters that have been approved and left in limbo and for future charters so that this situation we endure never happens again.

I do want to make sure that this account set up for the commissioner will be fully funded to at least deal with the immediate issue of our school here in Danbury. We want to ensure that you not only approve the house bill 6616 but that you include start up funds so that the SDE can fund the approved charters.

Again thank you for all of the amazing work you do and for listening to our community. You have made us feel that we are not alone and that you care. Again thank you!