



**Testimony of  
Mathew Hough, President Ansonia Federation of Teachers**

**Education Committee  
March 17, 2021**

**HB 6618 An Act Concerning Certain Funding Issues Affecting Boards of Education.**

Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez and members of the Education Committee. My name is Mathew Hough and I am the President of the Ansonia Federation of Teachers. Ansonia is an alliance district as you know, and these funds are essential for our survival. Three years ago, we suffered tragic layoffs due to issues with the city. We lost almost 10 percent of our teaching staff. It was only through the use of alliance funds that we have been able to recover. I believe however with additional flexibility, we would not only recover, but we would also flourish.

Alliance funding come with many strings attached. I certainly appreciate the oversight, but some of those strings can be constraining. One of our goals is to increase student attendance. We have done that by hiring attendance monitors, increasing communication, and working directly with the community. As a teacher, I know that if we made kids more reason to come to school, they would. If we had additional courses, more programs afterschool, have additional courses in the arts, and foreign language, as well as sports, students would come to school. Unfortunately, none of those things can be added using alliance funds. It would be supplanting what is normally covered by normal BOE funds. Except in Ansonia, that is not possible. All those programs have been cut, some of them years ago. We can hire climate specialists, interventionists, and truancy officers, but not a Spanish teacher. These are certainly much needed, but our students are missing out on classes and experiences that most other schools offer. If we were given additional flexibility, we would be able to offer the robust educational experience Connecticut is known to offer.

We also know that in uncertain times like we are in now, we sometimes have funds allocated for programs and positions that cannot be filled. We also know that you can only do so much in a year, yet in a year like this money can come from numerous sources. In districts like Ansonia, we can make tremendous progress for a year. Unfortunately, these funds are only good for a year. Once the year is up, we fall off the funding cliff. Allowing districts to carry forward funding or placing additional funds in a non-lapsing, we can better build for the future, and protect our students for years to come.

It is for these reasons; I support House Bill 6618 and ask you to do the same.