

Testimony Regarding H.B. 6619 An Act Concerning the Development of a Kindergarten to Eight Grade Model Curriculum

Testimony of Jesmar A. Suarez Sanchez
Norwalk, Connecticut.
Before the Educations Committee
Wednesday, April 7th, 2021

Dear Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez and the estimated members of the Educations Committee,

My name is Jesmar Suarez Sanchez, and I am from Norwalk, Connecticut. I am also a Social Work student from Southern Connecticut State University. Thank you for the opportunity to offer my written testimony concerning H.B. 6619, specifically on integrating LGBTQ+ and gender identities studies for grades kindergarten to grade eight.

As a member of this community, I would like to say that LGBTQ+ people and issues are embedded in the American experience. Growing up gay was not easy for me, especially growing up in a Hispanic and religious household. Had there been proper education on what it meant to be LGBTQ in the education system I think a lot of my issues and insecurities would have had less of an effect on me. I believe that if I would have seen this type of curriculum back in my days, I would have been more accepting of myself and of the community. We must continue to be progressive and normalize the community and educate future generations on our history and impact on the world, so that we continue to destigmatize the LGBTQ community.

When you think about places that aren't accepting of nontraditional gender norms and identities, the first examples that come to mind might be Religious places of worship, workplace, and even in schools. Nearly 9 in 10 Americans know someone who is gay or lesbian; 3 in 10 know someone who is transgender. Additionally, changes in policy and law across the country are legitimizing and supporting LGBTQ+ individuals. Excluding LGBTQ+ people and issues from the curriculum disregards reality and denies young people a view into themselves and into their world. Although at least seven states have laws prohibiting LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum, many policy makers, educators, and

school systems are embracing LGBTQ+ individuals and issues in the classroom. California stands out for its efforts in this area. I hope that this bill continues to move forward, it is really important for kids to see themselves in their education.

Thank you for your time,

Jesmar A. Suarez