

Dear Rep. Sanchez, Senator. McCrory and Members of the Education Committee,

My name is April Flores. I am a dietetic intern at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, a member of Connecticut Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and a lifelong resident of Windsor. I am writing to request your support for **HB 6621, specifically section 3 establishing a CT Grown for CT Kids grants program.**

The CT Grown for CT Kids strengthens the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early care sites.

Funding from CT Grown for CT Kids can support food-insecure students with healthy, local food, educational experiences for students through STEM and nutrition curriculum, mental well-being of students by bolstering resilience, and providing social emotional support, and school districts as well as early childhood providers in cultivating relationships with local farmers to purchase, promote, and serve CT Grown food.

This program is important to me because the adolescent population requires the advocacy of educators, administrators and government officials to act on their behalf. Over the past year students have lost out on in person education experiences and the food security that school food service programs provide. Providing funding for CT Grown for CT Kids grants programs will allow students returning to schools the opportunity to eat locally grown foods while learning in the process. This bill speaks to me because I am a mother and nutrition professional that values opportunities for children to learn in unconventional ways. The funding would allow students to develop a love for food that is grown in their towns!

Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

April Flores

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