

To the Honorable Members of our State Legislature and Educational Committee,

The importance of highly qualified educators can truly be beneficial to students over the life of their academic careers. It helps to shape and support them to strive to achieve. In my own experience, I was fortunate to initially have educators of color in my Elementary schooling but for a period of time during my middle school and high school years, I did not have another educator of color and the impact was sorely felt. It was not until returning to school in community college that I was fortunate enough to again experience the interaction and the inspiration from an educator of color. My experience was so positive that it inspired me to also want to become an educator.

We know from the research that students of color who experience at least one educator within their academic careers are more likely to successfully complete school in the K through 12 realms. It is also clear the impact that is felt from having role models that look like you with a similar cultural background and awareness helps in many situations but more importantly provides a sense of belonging to a student. Public school systems must appreciate that students are not just widgets: they are human beings who have feelings and experiences that they bring into the school and who need to be nurtured and guided to success. Who is better outfitted to help inspire the youth of tomorrow than those who have experienced similar obstacles and challenges as well as the impact on their learning and professional careers?

This is why I wholeheartedly support this bill SB1034 to identify and retain educators of color by providing them the resources and support that are critical to sustaining them as successful educators. Furthermore, it also allows our great state of Connecticut the opportunity to develop a framework that better reflects our society and promotes diversity. This will facilitate providing the proper access for students to educators that understand their circumstances and needs. Hopefully, this will in turn also inspire others like me to enter the field of Education, thereby helping to improve the conditions overall for every student in a sustainable way. Our country is measured by its educational system and the academic achievement of its students. The prosperity of our society is linked to all citizens having access to the equity that helps to shatter the glass ceilings in institutionalized bias that has held back many groups for far too long. Having a diverse educational workforce is an attribute of a progressive and innovative society that is serious about offering the opportunity for every person to attain the American dream

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