

**Testimony on Raised Senate Bill 1034**

**AN ACT CONCERNING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

**Education Committee**

**March 17, 2021**

**by: Rebecca Good, Ed.D – Founding Dean of Relay Connecticut**

Honorable Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, and Distinguished Members of Education Committee:

This testimony requests two edits to Section 1 of Raised Senate Bill 1034, An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention. In line 7 and line 16 residency programs appear to be reserved for alternate route to certification programs only. I would like to suggest changing the following wording in line 7 and 16 “an alternate route to certification program” to “a certification program”. This will allow all minoritized teachers and the districts that seek to recruit and retain minoritized teachers the opportunity to join a teacher residency programs via an alternate route or within a traditional graduate school of education.

Relay’s Teacher Residency program was established in Connecticut in 2016 as an alternate route to certification. This teacher residency program enabled aspiring educators to work toward their teaching certification while employed in schools in roles such as paraeducators. The Relay teacher residency program has experienced great success in Connecticut in diversifying the teacher workforce. In 2020 Relay was approved to transition the alternative route to certification teacher residency program to a graduate teacher residency program within Relay Graduate School of Education. This program provides a teacher residency program with the same flexibility as the former alternative program while enabling aspiring educators to earn a master's degree. Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-145b (g) as amended by PA 17-173, states that “on or after July 1, 2018, to qualify for a professional educator certificate, a person who holds or has held a provisional educator certificate... shall hold a master’s degree in an appropriate subject matter area, as determined by the State Board of Education, related to such teacher’s certification endorsement area.” A master’s degree is a key component of retention in the teaching profession, especially for our minoritized teachers. If the current language in section 1 of Raised Senate Bill 1034 remains limited to alternate route programs, our Relay teaching residents, 74 percent of which identify as minoritized educators and more than 20 Connecticut school districts that partner with Relay, will not have access to the opportunities outlined in this bill.

Please note the term “minoritized” has been used as an alternative descriptor for the term “minority.” Benitez (2010)<sup>i</sup> described his use of the word “minoritized as opposed to minority to refer to the process [action vs. noun] of minoritization” (p. 131). In the context of this testimony, minoritized teachers have been negatively impacted by structural and institutional discrimination throughout history. Benitez (2010) suggests that the term minority is a social construct developed over time, not fully representing the experiences of those individuals the term is meant to represent. Given this explanation the term “minority teacher” does not accurately recognize how the act of minoritization on teachers, exemplified by limitations to employment access or a lack of presence in the workforce, continues to be a dominant experience for those individuals who identify with a minoritized group (Good, 2019)<sup>ii</sup>.

This testimony is in support of Section 2- Section 6 of Raised Senate Bill 1034, An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention as written. It is clear this bill is intended to recruit and retain minoritized teachers in Connecticut schools, promotes teacher residency models in support of minoritized teachers and districts, and creates requirements of implicit bias and anti-bias training within the hiring process.

**Therefore, I respectfully request two changes in line 7 and 16 of section 1. In addition to the passage of sections 2-6 of Raised Senate Bill 1034. Furthermore, I would be honored to provide any additional information and offer support toward instituting legislation which increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of our Connecticut teaching workforce.**

Respectfully,

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<sup>i</sup> Benitez, M. (2010). Resituating culture centers within a social justice framework: Is there room for examining whiteness? In L. Patton, & G. Ladson-Billing, *Culture centers in higher education: Perspectives on identity, theory, and practice* (pp. 119-134). Herndon, VA: Stylus.

<sup>ii</sup> Good, R (2019). *The Impact of Connecticut Legislators on Teacher Diversity* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education.