



**TESTIMONY TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON RAISED BILL S.B. 1034, AN ACT CONCERNING
MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

Pastor William McCullough, FaithActs for Education
March 17, 2021

Co-Chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez, Ranking Members Senator Berthel and Representative McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to appear today. My name is Pastor William McCullough. I am Senior Pastor of Russell Temple CME Church in Bridgeport, the President of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Greater Bridgeport and Vicinity, and the Founder of FaithActs for Education.

I'm here today to represent 80 congregations and the countless children and families across our state who make up the FaithActs family. We support S.B. 1034: An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention.

As you know, our efforts this year have centered on making sure our children see Education Justice Now.

For too long Black and Brown children and low-income families in our schools have been told to "just get by with what you have, meager as it is" ... or "just wait, we're getting to you – just after we do these other things first."

And the help never comes.

That's why we're so excited for the transformation in the legislature, especially in this committee. It feels so good to see people who look like us, who come from where we come from, making decisions about our families and schools. I want to especially thank Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez, for your commitment to justice and equity. And your tireless efforts to increase the numbers of Black and Brown teachers in our public schools.

We hope, and as people of faith we also pray, that 2021 is the year to solidify previous progress made on minority teacher recruitment. We believe that this bill will put us on a concrete path to recruit and retain more educators of color, and eliminate the discrimination we know exists in hiring practices.

The data tell us that students of color excel when they have access to educators of color. This is why my daughter is an English teacher at Central High School in Bridgeport. But unfortunately, she is one of few.



In Bridgeport, over 86 percent of the students are Black and Latino, but 74 percent of the teachers are white. Only 12 percent of teachers are Black and only 11 percent are Latino.

In New Haven, 87 percent of the students are Black and Brown but 73 percent of the teachers are white. Only 14 percent of teachers are Black and only 9 percent are Latino.

Statewide, nearly half of public school children are Black and Latino. And the numbers are growing! Yet only eight percent – less than 1 in 10 – look like them.

What's worse is that many of these educators don't live in the communities they teach in, don't send their children to the public schools they teach at, and don't pay taxes in the district that provides their paycheck.

And this lack of diversity in our teaching force doesn't just impact students of color. Countless studies show the benefit of all students having access to teachers of color. Especially as we consider closing the racial divide in our segregated state, white students and communities would benefit greatly from having access to diverse educators.

Teaching is a noble profession. Aside from parents, teachers may have more influence on young lives than members of any other profession.

You know what it means when young children see themselves in the educators teaching them – people who look like them, understand their experiences, and can be role models and show them what their paths can look like. You know the transformative power this has over what they think is possible.

Vote yes on S.B. 1034 so that every student in this state has access to a high quality education and most importantly phenomenal teachers of color.

Thank you.

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