

March 17, 2021

Marlene Megos
Director, CT Teacher Residency Program

Good afternoon Honorable Chairmen, Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez, Ranking Members France and McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee. My name is Marlene Megos and I am the Director of the CT Teacher Residency Program (CT TRP) in partnership with the RESC Alliance.

I am here today IN SUPPORT OF Senate Bill NO. 1034 An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention with necessary amendments.

As you have heard before, the CT Teacher Residency Program launched in summer of 2019, is specifically designed to eliminate the most common barriers to certification for candidates of color.

In our interviews for this program yesterday and today, I have heard from candidates over and over again about their commitment to education, their deep desires to become a teacher and their experiences with few teachers of color in their schools. This is no surprise to me as I only had one teacher of color in my K-12 experience growing up in Meriden, Connecticut and have witnessed this time and time again in the districts I have worked and my own community now of West Hartford, I am committed to this program and support this bill as a way to amplify the voices of our black and brown colleagues and help Connecticut meet its commitment to increasing racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's teaching workforce.

CT TRP is a residency program that would be supported by this Bill. Our residency program requires candidates to take classes and work side by side with a mentor teacher having the hands on, authentic experience while receiving pay and benefits as a teacher's assistant or para.

In this vein, we would suggest modifying the definition of "residency program" to ensure that we are maximizing the number of qualified candidates such as ours who would be eligible under the bill. In furtherance of that objective, we suggest changing "and" to "or" in Section 1 (a)(3) as follows:

- o *a residency in which such participants serve (A) in a position requiring professional certification, ~~and~~ or (B) in a full-time position for ten school months at a local or regional board of education in the state under the supervision of (i) a certified administrator or teacher...and so on*

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As we plan to offer this program across Connecticut, we are upfront that the residency model requires dedicated funding of approximately \$73,000 per resident for tuition, materials, training, salary and benefits. Many districts cannot add this to their already stretched budgets.

While we appreciate the funding mechanism included in the bill, Currently, 17 of our 25 partner districts are NOT Alliance districts and it seems it would be difficult for these committed districts to benefit from this legislation as drafted.

In addition, using this funding mechanism could strain those Alliance districts that need that support. In lieu of the funding mechanism included in the bill as drafted, we urge the committee to incorporate the \$4.5 million into a general fund line item to be included within the SDE budget for purposes of funding this program and to assist us in training 60 new teachers of color in the coming year.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I wish you all a Happy St. Patricks Day.