

Highly qualified educators are crucial to students over their social and academic lives. It helps to shape and support them to strive to achieve as well as making their journey through life. For myself I had my first experiences with teachers of color in the second grade and that also created the journey for me to become a teacher. The sheer fact of seeing people who look like me and have that same passion to help others propelled me into this profession.

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. Even though we are living in a data driven culture we must realize that students need to actualize emotions and use the data to inspire people. The journey of our minority children has to be filled with diversity but it also has to be filled with an understanding of their culture in order to build the skills to navigate an otherwise non diverse universe. That is why we need to fill this need in our schools.

This is why I support this bill to identify and retain educators of color by providing them the resources and support that are critical to sustaining them as successful educators. We see professionals seeking out people to come and be a part of their industries and there should be a concerted effort to do it in ours. 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. 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.