

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7167

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION FUNDING.

Vote Date: 3/21/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 3/12/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill addresses key aspects of education funding in the state, particularly with respect to the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grants, tuition for choice schools, and funding for magnet, charter, and vocational agriculture schools. The bill ensures that underfunded towns will be fully funded starting in FY 26 providing necessary support for towns struggling with insufficient funding. Overfunded towns will be "held harmless" for the biennium (FY 26 and FY 27) with a gradual phase-out of excess funding over a five-year period, from FY 28 through FY 32. Alliance Districts will remain protected, continuing to be held harmless for all years. Additionally, a correction for Mansfield's population count will make them initially overfunded but eligible for hold harmless protection.

In terms of choice schools and tuition, the bill introduces a four-year phase-in of funding increases for magnet and vocational agriculture schools. Starting in FY 25, these schools will receive 42% of the total funding gain, with the percentage gradually rising over the next several years until full funding is achieved in FY 29. Charter schools will follow a similar structure, with no increase in FY 25 but a phased increase in the following years, reaching full funding by FY 29. However, the bill does not include provisions for tuition reductions or phase-outs, meaning tuition rates will remain flat at FY 25 levels, nor does it include RESC and charter inflation adjustments for FY 30 and beyond or the phase-down of Sheff weight for RESC magnets. This gradual approach to funding ensures stability and fairness, helping towns and schools adjust without sudden financial disruptions while working toward a more equitable educational system.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Charlene Russell-Tucker, Commissioner, State of Connecticut Department of Education](#): This analysis from the Connecticut State Department of Education outlines the fiscal impact of proposed revisions in H.B. 7167 concerning the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) and choice program grants. The Department notes that the proposal is not funded in the Governor's budget and would require additional appropriations. Specifically, Section 1 delays the ECS phase-out for districts set to lose funding, costing \$8.7 million in FY26 and \$17.4 million in FY27. Section 2 extends and increases funding for magnet and agricultural programs through FY29, adding an estimated \$17–18.8 million annually, totaling \$72 million over four years. Section 3 raises charter school grants starting in FY27, with projected additional costs of \$3.4 million in FY27 and \$12.2 million by FY29. These cost estimates are based on current enrollment data and assume no new charter schools will be added.

[TJ Nuccio, Children's Policy Analyst](#): The Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCSEO) supports H.B. 7167, emphasizing the bill's role in promoting a more transparent and equitable education funding formula. The testimony highlights the growing number of low-income and multilingual learners in the state and underscores the need for increased investment in K-12 education. The bill maintains full ECS funding beginning in FY 2026, phases in need-based funding for choice programs over four years and preserves tuition caps for magnet and agriscience programs. CWCSEO writes, "Increased public investment in K-12 education can yield greater student achievement and outcomes, especially among students in low-income districts."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Ron Acosta](#): strong support for fully funding education by fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing. He highlighted how staff shortages due to underfunding are disrupting student learning, sharing that he is often pulled away from teaching instrumental music lessons to cover other classes. "I am unable to give consistent instrumental music lessons because I have to cover classes," he explained. Acosta emphasized that funding inequities are putting Connecticut's most vulnerable students at risk and called on state leaders to act now, declaring, "Waiting is no longer an option."

[Oluwakayode Adebawale](#): voiced strong support for fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing, citing the direct effects of inadequate funding on high-needs districts. He emphasized the urgent need for more paraeducators, expanded special education services, better tutoring support, and increased access to technology, such as Chromebooks. He also called for pay equity across districts. "Funding inequities across Connecticut are putting our most vulnerable students at risk," he stated, urging lawmakers to act immediately: "Waiting is no longer an option."

[Azra Asaduddin](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, An Act Concerning Education Funding. She emphasized the growing and evolving needs in her district, particularly due to a "large influx of refugee students" who require additional support. Asaduddin urged the legislature to "adjust the funding formula to reflect student need," advocating for more equitable resources to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse student population.

[Seanice Austin](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167 and a fully student-centered funding model for K–12 education in Connecticut. She praised the legislature's prior efforts that enabled districts to provide "updated textbooks, better learning environments, and access to

high-quality education.” Austin emphasized that “the work is far from done” and called on lawmakers to continue addressing funding disparities by prioritizing students’ learning needs regardless of their district or school type. “We have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs,” she said.

[Jill C](#): voiced strong support for fully funding education by fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing. She described how underfunding has left her students without sufficient classroom technology and individualized academic support, particularly for struggling readers. “The student-to-teacher ratio does not allow teachers to provide the more individualized attention... crucial for developing fluency and comprehension,” she said. Jill emphasized that full funding would lead to smaller class sizes, better resources, and improved outcomes, concluding, “Waiting is no longer an option.”

[Mason Brescia](#): testified in strong support of fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing. He described a lack of basic resources like textbooks and supplies, noting the impact on students' morale: “They see that the school doesn’t take care of them so they feel like they don’t need to care about the school or their own education.” Brescia emphasized that chronic underfunding contributes to high teacher turnover and student disengagement. “Waiting is no longer an option,” he urged.

[Sherine Brown](#): testified in strong support of fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing. She emphasized the urgent need for more educational resources to engage students, including books and electronic devices. “Books are very important to help with assignments,” she noted, adding that each student needs a device “to be able to accomplish their task.” Brown urged state leaders to act now, stating, “Waiting is no longer an option.”

[Sabrina Buckwalter](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167 and the full implementation of a student-centered education funding model. She praised last year’s \$150 million investment in public schools as “a step in the right direction” but emphasized the need to finish the job: “We must see to it that we fully implement it so ALL of our public-school students are fully funded based on their learning needs.” Buckwalter urged continued commitment to equitable funding for all students, regardless of school type or location.

[Laquasha Bullard](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167 and a fully implemented, student-centered funding model for Connecticut’s K-12 public education. She credited last year’s partial implementation with improving learning environments and reducing disparities but emphasized that “the work is far from done.” Bullard urged lawmakers to continue prioritizing student needs over geography or school type, stating, “We have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs.”

[Erin Bullen](#): testified in support of fully funding education through the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula and ending tuition billing. She emphasized the impact of underfunding, noting that schools are “extremely understaffed” and that teachers are “being stretched thin.” Bullen added that full funding would allow for enriching student experiences like field trips and assemblies. She urged lawmakers to act, stating, “Waiting is no longer an option.”

[Charle Bullock](#): expressed strong support for H.B. 7167 and emphasized the importance of fully implementing a student-centered funding model. Reflecting on the recent \$150 million investment in public schools, Bullock noted it was “a step in the right direction,” but stressed

that “our work cannot stop there.” He urged lawmakers to ensure that all public-school students are funded based on their learning needs, regardless of where they live or the type of school they attend.

[Nanette Burch](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167, emphasizing the need to reduce funding disparities across Connecticut’s public schools. She highlighted how the quality of a student’s education is too often determined by “where they live and the type of public school they attend.” Burch argued that a fully implemented student-centered funding model would help ensure all students receive a fair and equitable education. “Every student deserves to have access to a high-quality K-12 education that allows them to reach their full potential,” she wrote.

[Jaqueline Cabrera](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167 and a fully implemented student-centered funding model for K-12 education in Connecticut. She praised the progress made through last year’s partial implementation, noting it helped reduce disparities and provide students with essential resources like “updated textbooks [and] better learning environments.” Cabrera emphasized, “We have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs,” and urged lawmakers to continue advancing equity in education funding.

[Alecia Cameron](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167, emphasizing the importance of fully implementing a student-centered education funding model in Connecticut. She praised the legislature’s previous \$150 million investment in public schools, calling it “a step in the right direction,” but stressed that the work is not done. “We must see to it that we fully implement it so ALL of our public-school students are fully funded based on their learning needs,” she urged, regardless of school type or location.

[Dawn Chandler](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167 and called for fully funding education by increasing ECS funding and ending tuition billing. She described a persistent decline in resources, stating that “funding for staffing needs, student support needs, and educational supplies seem to be non-existent.” Chandler emphasized the toll this takes on both staff and students in high-needs districts and urged lawmakers to act, declaring, “Waiting is no longer an option.”

[Mia Chen](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, praising last year’s \$150 million investment in public schools as a vital first step toward equitable education funding. She emphasized the importance of fully implementing a student-centered funding model that prioritizes learning needs over location or school type. “Our work cannot stop there,” she wrote, urging legislators to ensure “ALL of our public-school students are fully funded based on their learning needs.”

[Alexis Christmas](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, praising last year’s \$150 million investment in public schools as a key step toward equity. She emphasized the importance of fully implementing a student-centered funding model, stating it is essential to fund students “based on their learning needs — regardless of the type of public school they attend or where they live.” She urged continued collaboration to ensure all students in Connecticut can succeed.

[Brittany Coleman](#) expressed strong support for H.B. 7167, applauding last year’s \$150 million investment in public schools as progress toward equitable funding. She emphasized the need

to fully implement a student-centered model so that “ALL of our public-school students are fully funded based on their learning needs — regardless of the type of public school they attend or where they live.” She urged lawmakers to continue prioritizing student needs in education funding.

[Matthew Conway Jr.](#): expressed conditional support for H.B. 7167, commending the bill’s two-year “hold-harmless” provision that protects 81 towns from ECS funding cuts until FY 2027-28. He highlighted this as “essential to maintaining financial stability.” Conway also supported increased weights for low-income and English learner students and proposed incorporating student mobility into future funding formulas. However, he raised concerns about the exclusion of Open Choice from choice program updates and the precedent set by the Mansfield ECS correction. He urged further legislative analysis to ensure equitable and sustainable funding.

[Claudio Melendez-Cooper](#): voiced strong support for Connecticut’s student-centered funding model but criticized H.B. 7167 for omitting a key equity issue: the way the state funds teacher pensions. Drawing on his background in education finance, Melendez-Cooper argued that the current system—where the state pays all teacher pension costs, regardless of district wealth— “favors wealthier, less diverse, and higher-performing districts.” He called the practice “deeply inequitable” and inconsistent with the constitutional mandate from *Horton v. Meskill* to equalize education funding, urging lawmakers to reform teacher pension financing as part of broader funding equity.

[Julie Corbett](#): expressed strong support for H.B. 7167, praising last year’s \$150 million investment in public schools as a key step toward equity. She emphasized that the partial implementation of a student-centered funding model must be completed to ensure “ALL of our public-school students are fully funded based on their learning needs — regardless of the type of public school they attend or where they live.” Corbett urged lawmakers to stay committed to equity and fully implement the student-centered model.

[Francine Coss, Superintendent of Schools, Thomaston Public Schools](#): Francine Coss provided testimony on H.B. 7167 highlighting cautious support for the bill’s goal of equitable funding but raised concerns about potential negative impacts on towns like Thomaston. While the bill “aligns with the Governor’s proposal to increase ECS by \$85 million,” stakeholders warn that any reallocation of funds away from non-Alliance districts could lead to cuts in local programs and services. With ECS making up 42% of Thomaston’s budget, the town stresses the need for long-term funding commitments to avoid fiscal instability.

[Dan Croweak](#): testified in strong support of fully funding education through ECS and ending tuition billing. He highlighted the lack of sufficient paraeducators and mental health staff, noting, “My students need more support from psych/social workers, but we don’t have enough people.” He emphasized that full funding would help students “believe they could be something when they grow up,” and urged lawmakers to act now to address the inequities facing high-needs districts.

[Catherine Hall](#): Catherine Hall, a teacher in New Haven Public Schools, expressed strong support for fully funding education through ECS and ending tuition billing. She emphasized that her school is “understaffed” and stressed the urgent need to “fully fund education” to

support high-needs districts. Hall urged lawmakers to address funding inequities that are putting vulnerable students at risk, stating, “Waiting is no longer an option.”

[Marsela Rashidy](#): voiced strong support for fully funding education through ECS and ending tuition billing. She highlighted the lack of basic classroom materials, limited access to learning resources at home, and the absence of a full-time librarian and tutor due to inadequate funding. Rashidy emphasized that “fully funded education means students are able to practice at home... better test scores... [and] would mean my students who continue to fall through the cracks year after year, would finally stop falling.” She urged the state to act now, stressing that “waiting is no longer an option.”

[Kailee Dextrateur](#): strongly supports fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing. She emphasized that inadequate funding limits access to academic field trips, manipulatives, and essential classroom technology. She noted that “support staff is a HUGE need” and stressed the importance of smaller class sizes and subscriptions for academic resources. Dextrateur urged state leaders to address funding inequities, stating, “waiting is no longer an option.”

[Laura Discenza](#): testified in strong support of fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing. She emphasized the consequences of underfunding, noting that students lack adequate technology to complete mandated testing or gain experience with tools needed for future careers. Discenza warned that “funding inequities across Connecticut are putting our most vulnerable students at risk” and urged lawmakers to act now, stating, “waiting is no longer an option.”

[Ryan Donlon, Associate Executive Director, LEARN](#): testified in strong support of increased per-pupil funding for RESC-operated magnet schools. He emphasized that LEARN’s magnet schools provide “high-quality, specialized educational opportunities to students and families across the region,” helping to ensure “that academic excellence is accessible to all—not just a privileged few.” Donlon highlighted LEARN’s four magnet schools—The Friendship School, RMMS, Marine Science Magnet High School, and Three Rivers Middle College—and their successes in early childhood education, bilingual learning, environmental science, and college readiness. Despite these achievements, he warned that magnet schools face a deepening funding crisis: “Magnet schools have not received a substantial funding increase in over 15 years.” He stressed that without new investment, schools risk losing “inclusive environments,” “specialized instruction,” and “highly trained educators,” which could ultimately reduce choice and equity for students. He urged the committee to act, stating: “Investing in these schools means investing in academic excellence and the long-term success of Connecticut’s students.”

[Lauren Dooley](#): urged the legislature to fully fund education through the ECS formula and eliminate tuition billing. She highlighted the lack of basic classroom resources in her district, noting, “We do not have enough STEAM materials.” Dooley warned that funding inequities across Connecticut are harming the state’s most vulnerable students and called on state leaders to act: “We need to fully fund education!” She concluded by emphasizing that delays in funding are no longer acceptable.

[Sasha Douglas, Superintendent, CREC](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167 and emphasized the need for a sustainable funding formula for RESC-operated magnet schools. Drawing on personal experience as both an educator and a parent, she underscored the

value of meaningful school choice and equity, noting, “I am immensely grateful that our family had the opportunity to participate in meaningful school choice.” She praised the progress made in recent budgets and urged the legislature to allocate \$13.2 million in FY26 and \$20.4 million in FY27 to support RESC magnet schools. These funds would reduce burdens on sending districts, sustain high-quality instruction, and uphold the Sheff v. O’Neill desegregation mandate. She also asked legislators to support the Governor’s bonding request, highlighting that “RESCs lack a tax base or bonding authority, making this funding essential.”

[Timothy Dutton](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167 and a fully implemented student-centered funding model for Connecticut’s K-12 public education system. He praised the progress made by the legislature in reducing funding disparities through last year’s reforms, stating that the partial model has enabled districts to provide “updated textbooks, better learning environments, and access to the high-quality education they need and deserve.” Dutton emphasized that while progress has been made, “the work is far from done” and urged lawmakers to commit to fully funding students based on need, not ZIP code or school type. He called on the legislature to finish what it started and fully implement a funding system that promotes equity and opportunity for all students across Connecticut.

[Rachel Cunningham-Exavier](#): testified in support of H.B. 7167 and a student-centered funding model. Drawing from her personal experience growing up and excelling in Bridgeport Public Schools, she shared the academic struggles she faced in college—despite being salutatorian—compared to peers from more affluent districts. She recounted, “I felt defeated my first semester... my best would get me D’s and F’s.” She emphasized that the systemic inequities she faced as a student still persist today, saying, “Our youth in Bridgeport... are being failed with a lackluster education and wickedly insignificant resources.” As a mother, she expressed heartbreak over having to consider leaving her hometown to secure a better education for her children. Cunningham-Exavier urged lawmakers to fix the inequitable system and asked, “Why are you saying children in other areas are worth more than the children in places like Bridgeport, New Haven, Hartford, and Waterbury?” She called on legislators to create a just and equitable funding structure that closes the opportunity gap across Connecticut.

[Greg Florio, Executive Director, Capitol Region Education Council](#): speaking on behalf of the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) and the RESC Alliance, supports HB 7167 and its proposed phase-in for magnet school funding, requesting increases of \$13.2M in FY26 and \$20.4M in FY27. He emphasized that “the Governor’s budget proposal essentially flat funds magnet schools” and is not sufficient to sustain CREC’s 16 Sheff magnet schools. Without the increase, he urged the elimination of the 58% tuition cap. Florio also requested \$1.5M for the CT Teacher Residency Program to continue diversifying the educator workforce, noting that 97% of its nearly 135 placed teachers of color remain in the classroom. He further supported increased Birth-to-Three funding to reduce future special education costs and called for fully funding excess cost reimbursement.

[Lourdes Fonseca](#): supports HB 7167, emphasizing the need to reduce disparities in education funding. She argues that “resources and opportunities... are almost entirely based on where [students] live,” and advocates for a student-centered model to ensure equity.

Citing research on improved outcomes from increased funding, she urges continued progress toward fair, need-based funding across all public schools.

[Nicolette Forrest](#): supports HB 7167 and the shift toward a student-centered funding model. She praises the \$150 million investment in public schools made last year as a vital step but stresses the need to fully implement funding based on student needs. “Our work cannot stop there,” she says, urging continued commitment to equity so all students can succeed regardless of school type or location.

[Carol Gale, President, Hartford Federation of Teachers](#): supports HB 7167’s move toward equitable school funding but raises concerns. She criticizes the continued financial burden on districts like Hartford from magnet tuition billing, even with caps: “Local school districts should not have to bear the financial burden of paying magnet school tuition.” Gale also stresses that special education costs and responsibilities must be more distributed, urging a weighted formula for special education and proportional service requirements across all school types. Finally, she calls for better compensation, staffing, and support to address Hartford’s educator shortages and student needs.

[Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns](#): supports HB 7167 and calls for increased education funding for all school districts, especially small towns facing rising costs and flat ECS funding. She backs the bill’s provision to reinstate the hold harmless clause, noting its importance amid budget challenges: “Many towns have had zero increases in ECS funding for several years... This is imposing a significant burden on towns and already overburdened property taxpayers.” Gara also urges further support for school choice programs and relief from tuition billing burdens.

[Kathy Gardner](#): urges the legislature to fully fund education through ECS and end tuition billing. She emphasizes the need for more part-time paraprofessionals and funding for better trips and staff training for special needs students: “We need more money to give them better trips... to properly train staff who work with these students as well.” Gardner stresses that current funding inequities harm the state’s most vulnerable students and calls for immediate action.

[Shriley Gonzalez](#): supports fully funding education through ECS and ending tuition billing. She highlights that due to staffing shortages, students needing reading intervention are being placed in her classroom without proper support. She also notes that counselors and psychologists are split between multiple schools, asking, “How are we serving our students’ needs when we don’t have appropriate staffing?” Gonzalez urges the legislature to act now to address these inequities.

[Thana Green](#): supports H.B. 7167 and urges continued progress toward a fully implemented student-centered funding model in Connecticut. She emphasizes that the current partial model has helped reduce disparities and improved student access to resources like textbooks and better learning environments. Green stresses, “We have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs,” and calls for long-term commitment to equity in public education.

[Monique Holloway](#) supports fully funding education through ECS and ending tuition billing, citing the harmful impact of underfunding on high-needs districts like New Haven. She warns

that unequal funding deepens disparities and denies students equitable access to resources and support: “A lack of funding will only contribute to the disparaging divide in resources.” Holloway urges state leaders to act now to ensure every student’s needs—academic, mental, and physical—are fully met.

[Lisa Hammersley, Executive Director, School and State Finance Project](#): supports H.B. 7167 as a meaningful continuation of Connecticut’s move toward equitable, student-centered education funding. She applauds the ongoing phase-in of weighted, need-based funding for students in all public schools but urges the legislature to go further by eliminating general education tuition billing entirely, noting it “does not resolve the underlying issue” and continues to strain district budgets. She stresses that “equitable and adequate education funding is more urgent than ever” and calls for full implementation of a funding model that ensures all students are supported based on need.

[Kayla Harrison](#): supports H.B. 7167, emphasizing the importance of continuing progress toward a fully implemented student-centered funding model. She highlights the positive impact of last year’s \$150 million investment and stresses that funding should reflect students’ learning needs, not where they live or the type of public school they attend. Harrison urges lawmakers to ensure “ALL of our public-school students are fully funded based on their learning needs.”

[Steven Hernandez, Executive Director, ConnCAN](#): This testimony strongly supports HB 7167, emphasizing its role in advancing equity across all public-school types—traditional, magnet, charter, and vocational-agricultural. The proposed four-year phase-in of weighted, need-based funding is framed as a crucial step to ensure all students receive resources based on their individual learning needs, regardless of location or school type. The testimony highlights the bill as a fulfillment of Connecticut’s constitutional commitment to educational opportunity: “HB 7167 is more than a policy—it is a promise... a pathway to a future where every child in Connecticut can thrive.”

[Jessica Hickey](#): supports HB 7167 and emphasizes the need to fully implement the student-centered funding model initiated with last year’s \$150 million investment. She praises the progress made but stresses that equitable funding must extend to all students, regardless of location or school type: “We must see to it that we fully implement it so ALL of our public-school students are fully funded based on their learning needs.”

[Shanita Hill](#): supports fully funding education through ECS and ending tuition billing, citing how inadequate resources limit opportunities in high-needs districts. She highlights the need for more staff, programs, and transportation for out-of-state field trips. “Make staff want to be here and feel heard,” she writes, stressing that investment in both students and educators is essential to closing funding gaps.

[Valencian Hines](#): supports HB 7167 and a student-centered funding model that prioritizes learning needs over school type or location. She praises last year’s progress in reducing disparities and calls for continued investment: “It is absolutely critical that we maintain this effort toward an equitable and fully funded student-centered funding model now, and in years to come.”

[Marlene Hoyen](#): supports HB 7167 and urges full implementation of a student-centered funding model to ensure all students are funded based on learning needs. She writes, “It is absolutely critical that we maintain this effort toward an equitable and fully funded student-centered funding model now, and in years to come.”

[Laura Hutchins](#): supports H.B. 7167 and highlighted the disparities between urban and suburban school systems. She emphasized that her students lack consistent support in areas such as counseling, special education, and technology, while suburban students receive far more resources. “My students do not have the same level of access to education that my own children do in the suburbs,” she stated. Hutchins called full funding “a moral obligation” and urged lawmakers to provide consistent staffing and support so all students can succeed equally.

[Michael Jacobson](#) urged passage of H.B. 7167, citing firsthand experience with the challenges faced by students at Hallen School. They emphasized the urgent need for more funding and literacy support for fourth graders, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds. “There is no better use for our tax revenue and no wiser investment in the future of our state's people than to improve their educational level,” they wrote. The testimony called on lawmakers to ensure children are not left behind due to preventable gaps in literacy.

[Lance James](#): expressed strong support for fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing, emphasizing how underfunding impacts access to robust music education. He highlighted that effective music programs require both “pull-out” instruction for private lessons and sustained follow-through, adding, “Before money is attained, ask the teachers how to use the money.” James urged lawmakers to correct funding inequities that put high-needs students at risk and called for immediate action to fully fund education across Connecticut.

[Richard Jannelli](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167 and a student-centered funding model for Connecticut public education. He praised the legislature’s progress in reducing disparities by funding students based on need rather than geography or school type, noting that the partial implementation has already provided “updated textbooks, better learning environments, and access to high-quality education.” Jannelli emphasized that the work must continue and urged full implementation to ensure all students receive the resources necessary to succeed.

[James Jeter](#): James Jeter, a Hartford resident, testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, emphasizing its role in addressing longstanding disparities in education funding. He highlighted that access to quality education in Connecticut is too often determined by geography and school type rather than student need. Jeter argued that “every student deserves to have access to a high-quality K-12 education,” and praised the shift toward a student-centered funding model. He urged lawmakers to continue building on recent progress to ensure all students, regardless of background, are equitably funded and prepared for future success.

[Gladys Walker-Jones](#): expressed strong support for H.B. 7167 and its commitment to a scholar-centered funding model for Connecticut's K-12 public schools. She noted the legislature's progress in reducing funding disparities and emphasized the importance of continuing that work to ensure equity for all students. “We have a responsibility to our PK-12 scholars to fund them based on their learning needs,” she stated, urging lawmakers to fully

implement the model and provide all students with the tools they need to succeed both in and beyond the classroom.

[Judi Kanz, Nurse Practitioner, Hartford Public Schools](#): voiced strong support for fully funding education through ECS and ending tuition billing, citing the urgent needs of students in high-needs districts. She emphasized the importance of providing tutoring in reading and math to help students succeed. “Funding inequities across Connecticut are putting our most vulnerable students at risk,” she wrote, urging lawmakers to act now to ensure all students receive the support they need.

[Sara Kovack, Senior Organizer, Educators for Excellence](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167 on behalf of Hartford teachers, who could not attend due to school staffing shortages. She highlighted how underfunding has severely limited special education staffing—citing one school with only one special education teacher where four are needed—and created overcrowded classrooms, leaving students with just “roughly half a minute of the teacher’s time over a 50-minute period.” Kovack stressed that many students are going unidentified for special education services simply because schools lack the resources to support them, calling this “a disservice to students everywhere and to the city of Hartford.”

[Rachel Kwon, Organizer, Educators for Excellence](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167. She described severe staffing shortages and resource deficits—such as paraeducators being pulled into substitute teaching roles and students having to share computers and supplies across classes. She emphasized that schools lack sufficient counselors and social workers, causing students to miss out on mental health support and IEP-mandated services. “This scarcity creates friction and frustration among educators, families, and leadership,” Kwon stated, arguing that underfunding—not mismanagement—is the root issue. She urged lawmakers to fulfill their “moral obligation” to fund schools equitably and invest in students’ futures.

[Christopher Latka, School psychologist, New Haven Public Schools](#): expressed strong support for increasing minimum educator salaries statewide, emphasizing that such increases must include non-classroom specialists and paraeducators. He highlighted widespread vacancies—25% in school psychology alone—and described a worsening burnout crisis: “The natural consequence for doing 2 full-time jobs is that you can only do half the job in each building.” Latka advocated for minimum salaries that reflect cost-of-living adjustments and certification type, and urged lawmakers to protect veteran educators’ pay in the process. “Stable educators mean stable teaching and learning conditions, which will improve student performance and benefit communities,” he said.

[Kevonna Lee](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167 and a student-centered funding model for K-12 public education. She praised the legislature’s recent progress, noting that last year’s partial implementation allowed districts to provide “updated textbooks, better learning environments, and access to the high-quality education [students] need and deserve.” However, she emphasized that work remains and urged lawmakers to continue closing funding gaps based on student need, not location or school type. “We have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs,” Lee stated.

[Lesley Lema](#): submitted testimony in strong support of H.B. 7167 and H.B. 5001, citing firsthand experience navigating the underfunded special education system on behalf of her

younger sister. She shared Avery's struggles to access appropriate services despite clear academic and developmental challenges, describing repeated denials of summer school, delays in evaluations, and bureaucratic resistance even after approval. "This is the real cost of underfunded education: children who could thrive are instead left struggling, with families forced to fight for every resource," Lema wrote. She urged passage of both bills to ensure that early intervention, tutoring, and consistent funding are available to students in need statewide.

[Ivette JeanLouis](#): testified in strong support of fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing, emphasizing the burden underfunding places on staff and students in high-needs districts. She described how teachers often pay out-of-pocket for classroom needs and how field trips are limited because "parents can't pay." JeanLouis stressed the importance of more one-on-one support, smaller class sizes, and proper training for paraprofessionals in classroom management and safety. "We do not get paid enough for all the things we go through," she wrote, urging lawmakers to act now to close funding gaps.

[Aqueelah Mahdi](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, emphasizing the need for a student-centered funding model that allocates resources based on learners' needs, not geography or school type. Mahdi framed education as a legal and moral right, stating, "Education is not merely a privilege but a fundamental right and responsibility." She warned that inadequate funding leads to deteriorating schools, fewer academic programs, and student withdrawals—creating a harmful cycle. Supporting HB7167, she argued, ensures equity and affirms that every child deserves access to quality education regardless of socioeconomic status.

[Lauren Mancini Averitt](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167, praising the legislature's previous \$150 million investment in public education and urging full implementation of a student-centered funding model. She emphasized the importance of funding based on student needs, not location or school type, noting that while progress has been made, "our work cannot stop there." Averitt called on lawmakers to ensure that all public-school students are fully and equitably funded to give every child the opportunity to succeed.

[Luz Martinez](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, emphasizing the bill's role in addressing Connecticut's educational funding disparities. She argued that a student-centered model prioritizing learning needs over ZIP codes or school types is essential for equity. Citing research on the positive impact of increased funding, she stated, "These disparities in education funding are detrimental to not only our students and their futures, but to the future of our communities and our entire state." Martinez urged lawmakers to pass the bill to ensure all students have access to high-quality education.

[Rashanda McCollum](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, highlighting its potential to address persistent disparities in education funding across Connecticut. She stressed that a student's access to quality education should not be determined by their location or school type, and advocated for a model that prioritizes learning needs. "The resources and opportunities a Connecticut student have access to are almost entirely based on where they live and the type of public school they attend," she stated, urging lawmakers to continue advancing a more equitable and student-centered funding system.

[Shatoyia McCollum](#): expressed strong support for fully funding education by increasing ECS funding and ending tuition billing. She emphasized that underfunding in high-needs districts

like hers directly affects essential services such as reading intervention, tutoring, staffing, and classroom supplies. “Funding inequities across Connecticut are putting our most vulnerable students at risk,” she stated, urging legislators to act swiftly to ensure every student receives the resources they need to thrive.

[Natalee McIntosh](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167, praising its role in addressing inequities in Connecticut’s education system through a student-centered funding model. She emphasized that “the resources and opportunities a Connecticut student has access to are almost entirely based on where they live and the type of public school they attend,” calling for funding based on learning needs rather than location. McIntosh urged legislators to continue advancing equity so all students can reach their full potential.

[Eddie Mendes](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167 and a student-centered funding model for Connecticut’s public schools. He emphasized that the current system, though improved, still leaves many students underfunded based on where they live or what type of public school they attend. “We have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs,” Mendes stated, urging lawmakers to continue efforts toward a fully equitable funding system.

[Virginia Messina, Director of Counseling & Admissions, Norwich Technical High School](#): testified in support of H.B. 7167 but urged the legislature to go further in addressing Connecticut’s longstanding education funding disparities. She emphasized that a student’s zip code should not determine the quality of their education, noting, “It is appalling to me that students do not receive the same level of services throughout the state.” Messina called for increased state-level investment in public schools to ensure equitable access to counselors, mental health support, and essential services, especially amid national threats to education funding.

[Emely Morales Varona](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, emphasizing the bill’s role in addressing disparities in education funding across Connecticut. She called for continued movement toward a student-centered funding model that prioritizes students’ learning needs over their location or school type. Morales Varona stressed, “Not every student in our state is receiving a high-quality, well-funded education,” and highlighted research showing that increased funding improves academic and long-term life outcomes. She urged the legislature to support H.B. 7167 to ensure all students have a fair chance to succeed.

[Goviana Morales](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167 and emphasized the importance of fully implementing a student-centered funding model in Connecticut. She highlighted the progress made with the partial implementation last year, which helped districts provide improved resources such as updated textbooks and better learning environments. Morales stated, “We have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs,” and urged lawmakers to continue addressing funding disparities to ensure equity across all public schools.

[Brittney Morgan](#): expressed strong support for H.B. 7167 and its student-centered funding model, urging lawmakers to continue progress toward equitable education in Connecticut. She commended the legislature for last year’s partial implementation, which allowed districts to provide students with improved resources and opportunities. Morgan emphasized that “we have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs” and called

on legislators to ensure full and continued investment in all public school students, regardless of their school type or location.

[Maxine Nixon](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167 and a student-centered funding model that allocates resources based on learning needs rather than school type or location. She praised the legislature's progress last year in reducing funding disparities but stressed that "the work is far from done." Nixon urged lawmakers to maintain momentum toward full and equitable funding, stating, "We have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs."

[Mikaelle Olivier](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, praising the bill's continued effort to implement a student-centered funding model. She highlighted the success of last year's \$150 million investment, which provided students with greater resources and opportunities. Olivier emphasized the need to fully fund all students based on their learning needs, regardless of school type or location. She stated, "We must see to it that we fully implement it so ALL of our public-school students are fully funded based on their learning needs."

[Eliexer Orosco](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, emphasizing its role in addressing Connecticut's educational funding disparities. He advocated for a student-centered funding model that allocates resources based on student needs rather than location or school type. Orosco pointed out that "the resources and opportunities a Connecticut student has access to are almost entirely based on where they live," calling this inequity unacceptable. He cited research showing improved outcomes with increased funding and urged lawmakers to continue advancing equity through H.B. 7167.

[Iris Ortiz Sanchez](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167, highlighting its potential to reduce funding disparities across Connecticut's public schools. She stressed that "the resources and opportunities a Connecticut student has access to are almost entirely based on where they live," and called for a student-centered funding model that prioritizes learning needs over zip codes or school types. Ortiz Sanchez urged lawmakers to continue progressing toward equity, stating, "Every student deserves to have access to a high-quality K-12 education that allows them to reach their full potential."

[Narcisa Ortiz](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, emphasizing the bill's role in continuing progress toward equitable school funding. She praised last year's \$150 million investment in public schools, calling it "a step in the right direction," but noted that the work is not finished. Ortiz stressed the need for full implementation of a student-centered funding model, adding, "ALL of our public-school students [should be] fully funded based on their learning needs — regardless of the type of public school they attend or where they live."

[Frank Peter](#): voiced strong support for fully funding education through ECS and ending tuition billing. He highlighted how underfunding leaves classrooms understaffed and teachers overburdened with responsibilities beyond their roles, asking, "How then can we be the best for our kids?" Parker emphasized that full funding would ensure access to quality equipment and materials in his music classroom, helping to deliver a well-rounded education to all students.

[Daniel Pearson, Executive Director, Educators for Excellence](#): submitted testimony in support of H.B. 7167 and H.B. 7168 on behalf of over 1,000 teacher-members, calling for fully funded,

student-centered education. He stressed that persistent inequities—particularly in special education—demand urgent action, noting that in Hartford, special education teachers make up only 15% of the workforce but account for 31% of vacancies. “When we cannot give special needs students the resources they need... we are failing all students,” he stated. Pearson urged lawmakers to end tuition billing and fully fund ECS, while also endorsing H.B. 7168 for providing teacher tuition assistance to ease certification barriers and address the state’s critical educator shortage.

[Eric Protulis, Executive Director, EASTCONN](#): testified in support of sustainable education funding and expanded regional collaboration for special education services. He expressed appreciation for the \$40 million increase to Excess Cost funding in FY25, emphasizing the importance of reliable reimbursements: “When districts have financial stability, they can make proactive, student-centered decisions.” Protulis also advocated for additional RESC magnet school funding—requesting \$1M for EASTCONN in FY26 and FY27—to address tuition freezes threatening their viability. Protulis highlighted the vital role of EASTCONN’s special education and Birth-to-Three programs in serving high-needs students and families, stressing that without adequate funding, “families are left to navigate a maze of evaluations, legal requirements, and funding barriers” just to access basic services. He endorsed recommendations from the ACIR Interim Report, calling for stronger regional cooperation, expansion of RESC-run programs, and increased state support to create sustainable, high-quality services for students with disabilities across Connecticut.

[Fran Rabinowitz, Executive Director, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents](#): submitted testimony supporting H.B. 7167, emphasizing the need for equitable and adequate funding for all public school students in Connecticut. She highlighted that while progress has been made toward a student-centered funding model, further efforts are necessary to ensure every student receives the resources needed to succeed. Rabinowitz pointed out that disparities in education funding negatively impact student outcomes and the future of communities and the state. She urged the legislature to continue moving toward a fair and equitable student-centered funding model by supporting H.B. 7167. □

[Natasha Radford](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, emphasizing the importance of a student-centered funding model that prioritizes learning needs over zip codes or school types. She praised the legislature’s progress in implementing a partial student-centered funding system, which has enabled schools to offer updated textbooks, better learning environments, and improved access to quality education. Radford argued that while these steps are meaningful, the effort must continue until all students are fully and equitably funded. She stressed, “We have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs,” and urged lawmakers to remain committed to fully implementing this funding model.

[Anthony Randazzo, Executive Director, Equable Institute](#): testified in support of reforming Connecticut’s teacher pension funding structure as part of broader education equity efforts connected to H.B. 7167. He explained that the state’s current practice of covering 100% of the employer pension contributions for teachers—regardless of local salary levels—unintentionally creates significant funding inequities between districts. For example, Greenwich receives a state pension subsidy of \$4,375 per pupil, while Waterbury receives only \$2,208. “Districts that can afford to pay higher salaries also end up getting larger payments into the retirement system from the state,” Randazzo noted, calling this

arrangement “deeply impractical and unfair.” He urged lawmakers to consider a more equitable system where wealthier districts contribute toward the normal cost of pensions for high-salaried positions, and the resulting state savings are reinvested into ECS grants for high-need districts. “The Connecticut Supreme Court’s decision in *Horton v. Meskill* obliges this legislature to ensure that education financing systems are equalized,” Randazzo concluded.

[Marsela Rashidy](#): testified in strong support of fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing, emphasizing how underfunding harms students in high-needs districts. She described how her students lack essential resources both in and out of the classroom, including basic math manipulatives, access to learning tools at home, and school-based support staff like full-time librarians and tutors. “Fully funded education means better test scores,” she wrote, stressing that such funding would prevent students from “falling through the cracks year after year.” Rashidy called on state leaders to act urgently, asserting, “Waiting is no longer an option.”

[Mike Rebeschi](#): expressed strong support for fully funding the ECS formula and ending tuition billing, emphasizing how underfunding harms students in high-needs districts. He noted a shortage of STEAM materials and stressed that “fully funded education would positively impact students for years to come.” Rebeschi urged the legislature to address the funding inequities that put vulnerable students at risk and to act without delay.

[Chanel Redd](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, emphasizing its role in reducing disparities in education funding across Connecticut. She noted that a student’s access to resources is too often dictated by geography or school type and advocated for a student-centered model that prioritizes individual learning needs. “Every student deserves to have access to a high-quality K-12 education,” she wrote, urging lawmakers to keep pushing toward equity and fully fund all public-school students.

[Sheldon Reedy](#): expressed strong support for H.B. 7167, praising its efforts to reduce funding disparities in Connecticut’s public education system. He emphasized that current access to educational resources is largely determined by a student’s location and school type, which creates systemic inequities. Reedy urged lawmakers to continue progress toward a student-centered funding model, stating, “Every student deserves to have access to a high-quality K-12 education that allows them to reach their full potential.”

[Kassandra Reyes](#): voiced her support for fully funding education through the ECS formula and ending tuition billing. She noted the negative effects of underfunding in high-needs districts, particularly the lack of tutoring, enrichment programs, and basic supplies. Reyes urged legislators to act, writing, “Funding inequities across Connecticut are putting our most vulnerable students at risk.”

[Dayna Rivera](#): expressed strong support for H.B. 7167 and a student-centered funding model for K-12 education. She praised the state’s recent progress in reducing funding disparities and emphasized the need to continue this work, stating that “the work is far from done.” Rivera stressed the importance of funding students based on their needs, adding, “We have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs.”

[Aneetrai Rowland](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167, highlighting its potential to reduce education funding disparities across Connecticut. She emphasized that “not every student in

our state is receiving a high-quality, well-funded education” and argued that a student-centered funding model would prioritize students' needs over their zip code or school type. Citing research on improved outcomes from increased funding, she urged legislators to continue the progress toward equity, stating, “Every student deserves to have access to a high-quality K-12 education.”

[Lisa Ruffles](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, commending the legislature’s previous \$150 million investment in public schools and emphasizing the importance of continuing toward a fully student-centered funding model. She stressed that the current system should not determine student resources by zip code or school type, stating, “ALL of our public-school students [must be] fully funded based on their learning needs.” Ruffles urged lawmakers to keep working toward equitable funding to ensure every student can succeed.

[Jon Russo](#): expressed strong support for H.B. 7167, emphasizing the bill’s role in phasing equitable funding into choice programs like his own. Reflecting on his transformative student experience, Russo noted that many students in his urban program “have additional learning needs as defined by the ECS model” but have historically been underfunded simply for selecting a specialized program. He praised the bill’s phased inclusion of Agriscience programs in the ECS formula, stating it will ensure “funding for our underserved students...accurately reflects their needs.”

[Lon Seidman, Vice President for Government Relations, Connecticut Association Board of Education’s Board of Directors](#): submitted testimony in support of H.B. 7167, praising the bill for continuing the Legislature’s work toward a more equitable ECS formula by including magnet and agricultural schools under its umbrella. CABE also supports the cap on local district contributions for these programs and emphasizes the importance of maintaining hold harmless provisions for districts that would otherwise lose ECS funding—especially given the reduction in Special Education Excess Cost Reimbursement Grant funding.

[Tricia Simon](#): submitted testimony in support of fully funding education by fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing. She described how underfunding impacts her students’ learning, noting that “multiple grades and classes often have to share the same set of materials” and that students lack access to age-appropriate math manipulatives. She urged state leaders to act, stating, “Funding inequities across Connecticut are putting our most vulnerable students at risk.”

[Pierre Simpson](#): voiced strong support for fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing. He emphasized the need for after-school programs that help students discover their interests and stay off the streets, such as drama, dance, and youth center activities. “We need after-school programs that can help students find themselves or hidden talents they never knew,” he wrote. Simpson urged lawmakers to address the funding disparities that are putting high-needs students at risk.

[Rika Skog](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, highlighting its role in reducing educational funding disparities across Connecticut. She emphasized that while the state is often praised for its public schools, “not every student... is receiving a high-quality, well-funded education,” due to inequities tied to geography and school type. Skog praised recent progress toward a student-centered funding model but stressed that more must be done to

ensure all students are funded based on their learning needs. She urged continued legislative action, stating, “Every student deserves to have access to a high-quality K-12 education.”

[Jahneel Small](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167, urging full funding of the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula and an end to tuition billing. Drawing on conversations with Hartford teachers, Small described how staffing shortages force educators into roles outside their subject areas—like music teachers covering core academics—and how a lack of paraprofessionals harms students with diverse learning needs. She emphasized that full ECS funding would allow schools to hire needed staff and expand specialized programs, stating this would help provide “the individualized attention they deserve.” Small concluded by calling H.B. 7167 a vital investment in Connecticut’s future.

[Willie Smith Jr.](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167 and a student-centered funding model for Connecticut's K–12 public education. He praised the legislature’s recent progress in shifting to a funding system based on student needs rather than location or school type, noting that this has enabled districts to provide “updated textbooks, better learning environments, and access to the high-quality education they need and deserve.” Smith emphasized that while progress has been made, “the work is far from done,” and urged lawmakers to continue advancing a more equitable, fully funded education system across the state.

[Judith Smith](#): support of fully funding education by fully funding the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula and ending tuition billing. She highlighted how underfunding impacts high-needs districts, pointing specifically to the need for more tutoring. Emphasizing that “funding inequities across Connecticut are putting our most vulnerable students at risk,” she urged state leaders to act, stating, “Waiting is no longer an option.”

[Maria Solomon](#): expressed strong support for fully funding education through the ECS formula and ending tuition billing. She criticized the use of costly, ineffective curricula for preschoolers, stating, “They want to learn through play. Not from a curriculum someone thinks can help a preschooler.” Solomon emphasized the need for more physical classroom support and called for an end to funding inequities that harm vulnerable students, urging, “Waiting is no longer an option.”

[Laura Stern](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, emphasizing the bill’s role in reducing education funding disparities across Connecticut. She argued that access to resources should not depend on zip code or school type and praised the student-centered model for prioritizing learning needs. “Education is the foundation for opportunity,” Stern stated, urging lawmakers to continue progress toward a more equitable system that ensures “every student deserves to have access to a high-quality K-12 education.”

[Yvrose Tilus](#): testified in support of H.B. 7167, highlighting its importance in advancing a student-centered funding model that prioritizes individual learning needs over location or school type. She praised the progress made through last year’s partial implementation, which helped reduce funding disparities and improve access to quality education. Tilus emphasized, “We have a responsibility to our students to fund them based on their learning needs,” and urged lawmakers to continue pushing for a fully funded and equitable system for all Connecticut public school students.

[Cathy Traca](#): expressed strong support for fully funding education by fully funding the ECS formula and ending tuition billing. She emphasized the urgent need for more classroom support, including paraprofessionals and interventionists, as well as basic consumable materials like dry erase markers and manipulatives, which teachers currently purchase out of pocket. Traca also stressed that full funding would enable schools to better support students' mental health and social development through events and assemblies. She concluded, "We cannot continue to pay for these out of pocket," and urged legislators to act now, as "waiting is no longer an option."

[Stephanie Turner](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, emphasizing its role in advancing equitable education funding. She praised last year's \$150 million investment in public schools as a major step toward a student-centered funding model that prioritizes learning needs over location or school type. Turner argued that the state must now fully implement this model to ensure all students receive adequate resources, regardless of where they live. "Our work cannot stop there," she said, urging legislators to continue their commitment to equity and support H.B. 7167.

[William Turner](#): voiced strong support for H.B. 7167, highlighting its importance in continuing the shift toward equitable, student-centered funding. He praised last year's \$150 million investment as a "step in the right direction" that enabled students to access more resources and opportunities. Turner emphasized that the job is not finished, stating, "We must see to it that we fully implement [the model] so ALL of our public-school students are fully funded based on their learning needs." He urged legislators to stay committed to equity and back the bill.

[Rita WeissKoff](#): expressed strong support for H.B. 7167, emphasizing its role in addressing inequities in Connecticut's education funding system. She argued that the current model unfairly ties resources to geography and school type, and called for continued implementation of a student-centered approach that prioritizes need. "Every student deserves to have access to a high-quality K-12 education that allows them to reach their full potential," Weisskoff wrote, adding that while progress has been made, "there is still work to be done" to ensure fairness and opportunity for all students.

[Chmeak Wells](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, praising the legislature's past efforts to secure a historic \$150 million investment in public education and advance a student-centered funding model. She emphasized that this progress has helped address disparities, but more work is needed to fully implement a system where "ALL of our public-school students are fully funded based on their learning needs." Wells urged continued commitment to equity, stating, "Our work cannot stop there," and called on lawmakers to ensure every student can succeed, no matter their district or school type.

[Ashley Welton](#): voiced strong support for fully funding education through the ECS formula and ending tuition billing. She described the real consequences of underfunding, including the lack of transportation for after-school activities, insufficient resources for PBIS incentives, and the need for basic classroom supplies like tissues and hand sanitizer. Welton also emphasized the importance of investing in field trips and hiring committed staff to create a positive learning environment. She concluded by urging the state to act now, stating, "Funding inequities across Connecticut are putting our most vulnerable students at risk."

[Hyclis Williams](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, praising its aim to reduce funding disparities across Connecticut's public schools through a student-centered model. Williams emphasized that despite Connecticut's reputation for strong public schools, "not every student in our state is receiving a high-quality, well-funded education." She argued that current funding gaps are based largely on geography and school type, and that equitable funding is essential to improving both short- and long-term outcomes for students and communities. "Every student deserves to have access to a high-quality K-12 education," she wrote, urging continued progress on the model.

[Alberto Vazquez Matos](#): testified in strong support of H.B. 7167, emphasizing its role in addressing inequities in Connecticut's education funding system. He praised the bill's student-centered approach, which prioritizes students' learning needs over their zip code or school type, noting that "the resources and opportunities a Connecticut student has access to are almost entirely based on where they live." Citing research linking increased funding to better academic and life outcomes, he argued that the state must build on its progress and fully implement an equitable funding model. "Every student deserves to have access to a high-quality K-12 education," he urged.

[Javan Campbell](#): voiced strong support for fully funding education by fully funding ECS and ending tuition billing. Drawing from his experience in high-needs districts, he emphasized the importance of basic resources like classroom supplies, books, and field trips in enhancing student learning. He also stressed that equitable funding is essential to support students with diverse learning styles and disabilities, noting, "no one student learns the same." Campbell urged lawmakers to act now, stating that funding inequities are putting Connecticut's most vulnerable students at risk and that "waiting is no longer an option."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed

Reported by: Chris Peritore

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