

Public Hearing – Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission Jan. 29, 2014
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Thanks for the opportunity to speak to you about some of the important problems, concerns, issues and needs that face Spanish speaking students, their families and their teachers.

From my perspective as a public high school teacher, clearly there are many examples of failures to provide ELL students with equal and even basic educational opportunities. In my opinion ELL students are not being served with the equal education opportunities they deserve and are guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The United States Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires “an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation in its instructional programs.” School districts lack resources, especially in our poorer communities. Students need to be protected from those who would rob them of a good education or who are indifferent.

Research has shown that these students need to be taught in their primary language to improve executive brain functioning and overall cognitive abilities. A quality bilingual education must include adequate time for students. Connecticut’s imposed time limit of thirty months is not sufficient and suitable for providing our students with the academic language skills they will need to be successful in today’s society.

The following is a quote from a Connecticut State Department position statement (2010), a true bilingual education “program will allow students to receive culturally responsive instructional curriculum and pedagogy to develop English language skills while using their native language to succeed academically.”

The law is on the side of our students. Ethics is on the side of our students. Clearly it is not going too well for our students. Your Commission needs to exert its influence on the Governor and Legislature so that they are aware of the injustices to our students on a daily basis. *Que Dios los acompañe.*