



Testimony submitted to the Appropriations Committee on H.B. 6439, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, and Making Appropriations Therefor

March 9, 2021

Co-Chairs Senator Osten and Representative Walker, Ranking Members Senator Miner and Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Bishop Randall Furlow, and I am Presiding Apostle at Ekklesia Global Fellowship in Hamden and Waterbury.

I am honored to speak today. I'm here to oppose H.B. 6439, specifically, the governor's proposed education budget. I'm also asking you to modify the budget to align with S.B. 948, which is currently in the Education Committee.

I have been blessed with a lovely wife and partner in ministry, Lady Autumn-Marie. Our union has blessed us with four wonderful children.

I am here for them but not JUST for them. I am here for thousands and thousands more Black and Brown children who simply must have every opportunity to reach their God-given potential.

And God knows they need it.

This legislation will close a gap in school funding that tells low-income Black and Brown children that they are lesser than their brothers and sisters in the suburbs.

Notice I call them the suburbs and not the "finer parts of our state." I do that because any place where little children live and families live and are trying to grow together to live in harmony and dream dreams – there is no finer place.

Streets lined by manicured lawns are no finer than streets bordered by sidewalks and storefronts.

But our state's school funding system treats them better. And so the children who live in those neatly landscaped neighborhoods receive funding and resources for their schools that tell them, yes, you are better than other kids.

And it tells children and families in my city of New Haven, as well as Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, Waterbury, and more – that no, you are lesser. And you deserve less.

That is not God's way. And it should not be our state government's way.



You see God doesn't judge us based on what we accomplish or how successful we are. He measures us simply by how we treat others. In Matthew Chapter 25, Jesus calls on those who fed Him when he was hungry, clothed Him when he was naked, and looked after Him when he was sick to come and be blessed.

Confused because they don't recall those interactions, they question, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you." To which He replies, "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Judgment day is coming, so I ask you, what will you do for the least of our children?

Vote "no" on HB 6439. Please modify the proposed budget to reflect the values of justice and equity in education.

Thank you.

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