



Written 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 Carolyn George, and I'm from Bridgeport, Connecticut.

I'm writing to oppose H.B. 6439 and Governor Lamont'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. This would:

- Address generational underfunding by sending millions more dollars to communities that educate Black, Brown, and low-income children.
- Make funding more equitable by reflecting the learning needs of English language learners and children in communities with concentrated poverty. Right now, cities like Bridgeport and New Haven don't qualify for concentrated poverty weights.
- Fund all public schools through a needs-based formula that includes magnets, charters, and vocational-technical schools without taking money away from traditional schools.
- Eliminate the phase-in and fully fund ECS. Under current law, a second grader will be in high school before they receive their full funding.

I have raised multiple children in Bridgeport and I know firsthand the harm underfunding our schools can have on the minds of young people. Our kids are suffering! Afterschool programs and clubs have been cut year after year. What do they end up doing? They turn to gangs, drugs, end up going into the system. You are building new prisons to put our kids in instead of more schools. Are you telling me that there is more money for incarceration than there is for education? I always used to tell my kids that education is key, but they must have the funds to receive that education. I work in childcare where we are often short-staffed by 2 or 3 teachers. We often have to cover shifts and I wonder if this would be true if Bridgeport had more money to support our children and their dreams. How many of our kids want to become teachers but can't due to the quality of education and lack of programs that help them live their dreams. Underfunding causes that! The kids in towns like Westport don't have the suffer but ours always on the short end of the stick. Our kids deserve the same quality education as the rest of the students in Connecticut.

Our state's education funding system is racist and classist. We spend more on educating affluent white children than low-income children and children of color. Then we spend even more to police, prosecute,



and incarcerate those who are failed by our education system. I'm asking you to help make Connecticut a more just and equitable place to live.

Please modify the proposed budget to reflect the values of justice and equity in education.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and leadership on this issue.

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