

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Emily and I'm from West Hartford. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to H.B. 6439 and its pause of the ECS formula. Over the last 12 months, we have watched our educators, parents, and students navigate distance and hybrid learning during the global COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen the struggles they face, struggles that have only exacerbated the inequities within Connecticut's public school system. We know how difficult it has been for districts that do not have adequate resources to educate their students amid a pandemic, and we know that **equitably** funding our districts is critical to the success of our students and communities, now more than ever. Even in West Hartford, where some have more resources, way too many students have slipped through the cracks this year. Pausing the ECS phase-in for two years will do a great disservice to our students, particularly those who have additional learning needs. While districts that have a small population of high-need students might be able to survive the phase-in pause, districts with a large population of students with greater learning needs will suffer. It's no secret that Connecticut's public schools are deeply racially and economically segregated. There is a \$639 million funding gap between Connecticut districts that serve student populations that are majority white versus those that serve a majority BIPOC population. The impact of this gap has only become more apparent over the last year and we cannot keep perpetuating this gap by postponing ECS funding. We owe it to all of our students, but especially our students of color, to do everything in our power to close this funding gap as soon as possible. I understand these extraordinary times have impacted our state's budget, but our students have been demonstrating such resilience and dedication in these same extraordinary times. The least we can do is fully and equitably fund all of our students NOW.

Thank you for the opportunity to share some of my perspective on this very important issue

Sincerely,

Emily Hofstatter
West Hartford, CT