



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 Minister Willie, 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.

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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