



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 Ledon Velez-Caldwell, and I'm a father 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.

I have 2 children, a son who just turned 5 and a daughter who is 16 months old. I've been an advocate for education since my son was 2. I thought 3 years was plenty of time to show and prove how racist and classist the education system was in Connecticut and fix the problem. Last Friday, we celebrated my son's 5th birthday and my heart sank knowing he was officially school age. The governor's proposed budget is borderline criminal for students of color across the state.

It brings me anxiety to think about the control you have over my children's futures. Granted, as long as I'm around, my kids will be educated and set up for success as much as possible. My daughter's mother is more than willing to leave the city of Bridgeport and the state of Connecticut if the state's budget doesn't reflect the values of justice and equity in education. You can make sure our next budget does that.

You can't keep putting a bandaid on an issue that needs full reconstructive surgery, and you can't keep acting like we, your constituents, don't see what's happening clear as day. REJECT the governor's proposed budget and stick up for the future of the state, instead. I'd like for my daughter to grow up in the state she was born.

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

Ledon Velez-Caldwell
170 Atlantic St
Bridgeport CT 06604

FaithActs for Education
857 Post Road, Suite 310
Fairfield, CT 06824