

**Testimony of
Faith Sweeney
Westport Educator
Before the
Education Committee
Re:**

**S.B. No. 1034 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND
RETENTION**

March 17, 2021

Good afternoon Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Faith Sweeney, and I am a K-5 Literacy Coach in Westport CT. *I am writing to show my support for Raised Senate Bill 1034, An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention.*

I am in full support of this bill, however, there is minimal language on the plan for retaining teachers of color. I work in a predominantly white community that is increasing in diversity as we speak. The importance of having the teaching population mirror the student population is vital. All students, black and white need to know how to interact with people that do not look like them, act like them or speak like them. Too often, I hear or read about white students feeling unprepared for the diverse world because they have been living and schooling in a bubble of whiteness. As a teacher of color in a predominantly white community, I provide students, families, and my colleagues a picture and voice of what one person of color experiences and believes, but I am only one person. There are only a few other teachers of color in my district, and we can't bear the burden of building a diverse community and repairing race relations for all. It is not enough to recruit a pool of teachers of color without the consideration of ways to retain teachers of color, especially in predominantly white communities where teachers of color often face racial tension, bias, and discrimination from their students, colleagues, and staff.

I truly appreciate the implicit bias training at the guidance and human resources level. This training should be ongoing and constant.

Faith Sweeney

K-5 Literacy Coach

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