



**NORTHEAST**  
CHARTER SCHOOLS NETWORK

**Education Committee Public Hearing**  
***Senate Bill 8: An Act Implementing the Governor's***  
***Budget Recommendations Concerning Education***

**Monday, February 26, 2018**  
**Yamuna Menon**  
**Connecticut State Director**

Good day Chairperson Fleischmann, Chairperson Slossberg, Chairperson Boucher, and members of the Education Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to share testimony. My name is Yam Menon and I serve as the Connecticut State Director for the Northeast Charter Schools Network.

The Northeast Charter Schools Network is a non-profit membership and advocacy organization for public charter schools in New York and Connecticut. We are committed to ensuring that kids and families have access to great educational options and that public charter schools are a critical piece of a strong and healthy educational system for our state.

While our state continues to work towards improving our educational system in the midst of increasingly challenging fiscal times, we understand that tough decisions have to be made. We ask this committee and the General Assembly to do so with a mind to investing in our state's future through its education system and in what's working and in what families continue to demand - our state's public charter schools.

Senate Bill 8, *An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Concerning Education*, includes the much-needed per-pupil increase for state charter schools to \$11,250 as was passed in the bipartisan state budget last fall. Public charter schools in Connecticut have been flat-funded for four years at \$11,000 per pupil in the wake of rising costs, and do not have the same access to facilities, facilities funding or capital funding as all other types of public schools. Last year lawmakers passed the increase in a bipartisan effort as they also sought to make changes to the state's funding formula. We urge the committee and the General Assembly to support maintaining this modest funding increase.

While this needed increase is an important step for our state's public charter schools, the state's current education funding system still leaves great inequities for these public schools and other public schools throughout the state. We urge the committee and the General Assembly to continue the work toward a unified, single and fair education funding formula for all public school students, including public schools of choice. While a funding formula was passed last year and is slated to go into effect for the fiscal year ending in 2019, schools of choice like public charter schools are left out of this formula. Even worse, the formula still leaves the state with over *ten different school funding*

*formulas* that have little or no relation to student learning needs, resulting in a wide variance in funding across similar school districts and types of schools.

With the passage of this formula we took an important first step, but we can and must do more. Our public charter schools educate over 10,000 kids and there are more than 7,000 names on waiting lists throughout the state. Many of them are part of underserved populations in the state's lowest performing districts, and their charter schools deliver great results for them. Fair and reliable funding is vital to our state's charter community.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to our state's education system. We look forward to working with the committee and the General Assembly toward a stronger education system, inclusive of public charter schools, that helps moves this state to a brighter future.

Thank you.