



**NORTHEAST**  
CHARTER SCHOOLS NETWORK

**Education Committee Public Hearing**  
**Wednesday, March 14th, 2018**  
**Senate Bill 455, *An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention***  
**Yamuna Menon**  
**Connecticut State Director**

Good day Chairperson Fleischmann, Chairperson Slossberg, Chairperson Boucher, and members of the Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity testify today. 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.

We testify in support of provisions of Senate Bill 455, *An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention*.

Senate Bill 455 would help to create the conditions to grow a strong and diverse educator workforce, also amends provisions on teacher certification, including those related to the charter educator permit. This General Assembly has made concerted efforts in recent years to improve policies and remove barriers to diversifying our educator workforce, and this legislation continues that charge.

Connecticut's public charter schools value a quality and diverse educator workforce, as evidenced by the comparatively high percentages of educators of color reported. As of 2016 data reported from the State Department of Education, over half of the state's public charter schools report employing between 18 percent and over 44 percent educators of color, and many of our state public charter schools report some of the state's highest percentages of educators of color in the entire state. While we know that our state has room to improve in this area, our state's public charter schools demonstrably contribute to these important efforts.

Additionally, the bill proposes sensible changes to the charter school educator permit, including granting the charter school educator permit upon satisfactory completion of a subject matter area-specific assessment based on the subject that the candidate is actually seeking to teach at the public charter school. It also critically creates a path forward to professional certification for individuals who have the charter educator permit to be able to obtain a provisional educator certificate upon completion of three years of successful teaching, commitment to continued education and professional development, and a showing of effectiveness during the time in which the candidate has the permit.

While we support this legislation and ask the committee to do the same, we also ask the committee to include school leaders as well as educators, and to provide a path to professional certification and not only provisional certification, which is time-bound and requires additional coursework to obtain it. Our state's public charter schools also need great teachers and school leaders in every classroom and every school building, and efficient and fair paths to full, fair and professional certification critically provide paths to be able to best serve our schools.

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 on these critical matters of utmost importance to our community.