

Babz Rawls Ivy

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Education Committee, Senate Bill 1096

Hello. My name is Babz Rawls Ivy and my child attends Common Ground High School, a charter school in New Haven. My child is in the 10th grade and has been attending Common Ground for 2 years. Sending my child to a charter school has been a great, positive experience. As you know New Haven has a great deal of choice, some based on lottery and some based on geography... meaning if you happen to live in a particular neighborhood and can access that school, then great.

Common Ground is an amazing school...an urban farm in the middle of a very urban city. That is a level of coolness unmatched by anything remotely close to this kind of experience. Environmental justice...social justice is second nature to the kids that go there. It is a part of the culture. You learn to care and take care of your environment and food isn't what you get at the grocery store it is grown and harvested by your own hands. Food, the environment and the respect for each other as students and teachers is protected and treated as sacred. All this is tied to economics, and race, and opportunity and access. These students take it all on unflinchingly with superior teachers and support staff who guide and direct them through all of it. They are building community from the ground up and everybody wants a part of that.

Seeing the great experience my child is having at Common Ground, I am here today to ask that you oppose the proposed two-year charter school moratorium. Charter schools are some of the most productive and innovative schools in Connecticut; it would not make sense to limit their potential, especially with thousands of children around the state waiting to get into a charter.... I have another child at home waiting as well! Charters are public schools. Charters exist because the desire for additional educational opportunities exist.

Parents want options for their children. Having multiple, quality options available gives peace of mind about where to send your child, and Common Ground has been that option for me. Education has been the cornerstone of my family. My children will not be the first generation college students... but the desire to have them be prepared for that level of educational pursuit is truly important to me.

Putting a moratorium on charter schools denies thousands of children throughout Connecticut the chance to go to a great school and be ready for college and careers. Waiting two years is painful for the thousands of children waiting. They can't afford that loss of time and neither can we as a state.

Thousands of parents across Connecticut are looking for more options. Please do right by them and oppose this moratorium. Charter schools are a great option in many communities already and they should be allowed to expand and help more and more families who want that option. Thank you for your time.