

# Connecticut Education Association NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release  
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## **Connecticut Teachers Testify in Support of Minority Teacher Recruitment Bill**

Discuss CEA's awareness campaign to encourage more students of color to enter the teaching profession

Connecticut teachers participating in CEA's new awareness campaign to encourage more young people of color to pursue teaching careers shared their stories with legislators at the State Capitol today. The teachers testified in favor of Raised Bill 390, An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention.

Those testifying included

- 2020 Teacher of the Year finalist Marquis Johnson, who is a science teacher at Sage Park Middle School in Windsor. Marquis explained the importance of an inclusive curriculum for all students.
- 2019 Teacher of the Year and Bridgeport music teacher Sheena Graham shared her experiences, including how a teacher of color influenced her profoundly and is the reason she teaches today.
- Westport teacher Faith Sweeney discussed why a diversity of perspectives is essential for all students. She shared her stories of often being the only minority in her school and sometimes her entire district, as well as how she is helping to tackle a number of racial incidents happening in the wealthy suburban school where she teaches.

Research shows that all students benefit from having teachers of color. Students of color, in particular, perform better in school, are more academically engaged, and feel more connected to their teachers when taught by educators of color. Right now, more than 40 percent of Connecticut's schoolchildren are minorities, but only 8 percent of the state's teachers are people of color.

CEA is working hard to make real progress as we enhance the diversity of our education professionals. CEA's new campaign, [Teaching Is Calling You](#), highlights teachers as role models for their students as well as mentors for young people who may never have considered the positive difference they could make as future educators. The public awareness campaign includes TV, radio, print, and social media ads, with video vignettes that illustrate the positive influence teachers of color have on their students and school communities.

CEA is deeply committed to this project and, with support from the National Education Association, will continue to enhance its efforts to create a diverse teaching force that reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of Connecticut.

Watch the ad and learn more about the campaign, Teaching Is Calling You, at [cea.org/teachingiscalling](http://cea.org/teachingiscalling).  
[Click here to view teacher testimony.](#)

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The Connecticut Education Association is Connecticut's largest teachers' union, representing active and retired educators across the state. For further information contact Nancy Andrews at 860-725-6317, [nancya@cea.org](mailto:nancya@cea.org).  
Visit [cea.org](http://cea.org) or follow us on Twitter @ceanews and on Facebook at CTEdAssoc.