

Written Testimony

Opposition to part of HF2497

**Lines: 173.13, 177.13, 218.23**

- My name is Verónica Castellanos-Vasquez, I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity to speak to you today about teacher licensure barriers in MN. We represent a group of teachers of color with Tier 2 licensed teacher. I am a kindergarten teacher.
- I appreciate your willingness to listen to us today and with the intent to learn about our challenges, our experiences, and our contributions as immigrants and Hispanic teachers to our communities and the State of MN as educators.
- We all come from different countries where Spanish is the native language. We have been blessed to find opportunities to contribute our cross-cultural and multilingual expertise in the United States system, particularly in public education.
- We excel at our careers as educators because as native Spanish speakers with native fluency in English we are uniquely suited to fulfill the duties of our work: educating bilingual and bicultural students.
- We are here to share our stories and experiences as we seek your support in recognizing our legitimate academic background and our experiences as educators.
- As I mentioned earlier, I am a Tier 2 licensed teacher after completing a master's in education in Bilingual Programs with the University of MN.
- I am starting my 6th year as a kindergarten teacher in a Dual Spanish Immersion school, earning an award as a Fox 9 top teacher in 2019 and 9 years as a bilingual associate educator for Minneapolis Public Schools. I still don't have my Tier 3 license because I have been unable to pass the content exams. I work now for Edina Public Schools. We are opening a new Spanish immersion this fall, and they wanted expertised teachers to build this program. They wanted the best
- We hope that you are persuaded to see us, and other teachers like me as valuable assets in the education system. Parents seek programs like the one at Edina not only because of the benefits of being bilingual, but also because of the multicultural learning experience that an educator like me, can bring into the classroom
- I ask that you keep the tier licensing pathway as is right now, my historical performance evaluations demonstrate that I am an effective educator. I want to stay in my job, I want to keep being a kindergarten teacher and it is an honor for me right now that different districts seek my expertise to work for them. Please take in consideration my story and my colleagues' stories. Thank you.

**VERONICA CASTELLANOS-VASQUEZ**

**Countryside Spanish Dual Immersion School**

**Edina Public Schools**