

Testimony from Mary Anne Quiroz

Good morning Chair Youakim and Members of the Education Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Mary Anne Quiroz. I am a Parent, Community Organizer, Educator and also Director of Indigenous Roots Cultural Arts Center.

Thank you to the bill author - Representative Sencer-Mura - for your leadership on the Ethnic Studies legislation this year. And thank you to the Chair for including important Ethnic Studies investments and provisions in the House Education Finance bill.

As an immigrant mother and grandmother to mixed children, Ethnic studies is imperative to the academic growth of all young scholars as well as grounding one's self identity and place in society. I want my children and grandchild, as well as all young scholars, to know that their ancestors contributed greatly to building this country. That their histories and stories are seen and acknowledged amongst their peers. In turn they also learn about the stories of others.

As someone who immigrated from the Philippines at a young age, the required textbooks in middle and high schools presented Native Americans as past tense, Black history confined to slavery, and the civil rights movement with little to no mention of Asians and Latinx peoples. I do not believe our young scholars need to wait until they attend a college or university to receive Ethnic Studies related courses. Ethnic studies must be accessible at a young age in our education system.

As Howard Zinn stated. "History is important. If you don't know history it is as if you were born yesterday. And if you were born yesterday, anybody up there in a position of power can tell you anything, and you have no way of checking up on it."

The Ethnic Studies provisions in this bill are an investment in current and future generations entering adulthood with a sense of belonging, confidence, liberation and love for who they are and where they come from.

Again, thank you for including Ethnic Studies in this legislation.