Janessa Lambert

BIPOC candidate and Aspiring Educators of Color Scholarships Awardee

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Sean Herring

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Higher Education omnibus bill.

To whom it may concern,

It is my pleasure to introduce myself as Janessa Lambert, a student at the University of Minnesota. For the past two years, I have worked hard to earn my Master's degree as a K-12 English as a Second Language Teacher. I became aware of Minnesota Grow Your Own Teachers (MNGOT) program through the Anoka/Hennepin School District, for whom I have worked for four years. I was among those who received assistance for student-teaching. My education has been made possible in part by the BIPOC candidates and Aspiring Educator of Color Scholarships. Such financial assistance allowed me to student-teach and still care for my family.

I personally have found it difficult to balance the financial burden when it comes to achieving a higher education. My career started as a paraeducator, and I then moved into a Special Education Paraeducator position full-time to provide for my family. Through this pandemic, my husband and I have been able to keep our family afloat, but it has not been easy. My husband and I have three children, all under thirteen years old. Thanks to this grant, helped to make ends meet even when I had to take a leave from work. I did not have to get a second job, but I know so many others who did, even after receiving this grant.

To conclude, I would like to point out that I was not prepared for taking a leave of absence to student-teach and having to lose more than ten thousand dollars. By increasing the amount of money available to aspiring educators of color, could make all the difference in helping those who are underrepresented and choosing this profession when so many others are leaving. As a result of this financial assistance, I was able to complete my education, provide for my family, and feel less stressed about financial obligations while I was a student teacher.

Thank you for listening to my testimony and for your time. The financial support I have been awarded has not only changed my life but also the life of my children.

Sincerely,

Janessa Lambert