



February 23, 2022

Representative Richardson
Education Policy, Chair
403 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for HF 3434

Dear chair Richardson and members of the committee,

My name is Jose Alvillar and I'm the statewide director of youth programs for Unidos MN, a grassroots non-profit organization that works with our Latinx community on intersecting issues of education, climate, and immigration justice. I am here today to express my support for House File 3434. As a youth worker and member of the Ethnic Studies Coalition, I believe that investing in our schools through the implementation of ethnic studies is crucial to having a more holistic representation of our history. One that honors the upbringing and lived experiences of all our students regardless of their race, gender, zip code, or socioeconomic status. Ethnic Studies would not only bring a fuller representation of our history, but it will also help us address our state's achievement gaps, which according to a 2019 report by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis is among one of the worst in our nation.

Investing in Ethnic Studies will provide a better future for all our students, but also a better means of success for them. Research from Stanford University and San Francisco State University have proven that ethnic studies courses have boosted attendance and academic performance across all areas of discipline for K-12 and higher education. Also, the added funds at the Department of Education will be crucial in accurately implementing ethnic studies in our schools. This will give our communities clarity and a commitment from the department of education and the governor's office that we as a state must be moving towards a full representation of everyone's history. I truly believe that as a state we can be leaders in this work and ensure that we do right by all our students, educators, and community members. Again, I urge the committee to support this bill and invest in our future. Thank you so much for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jose Alvillar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jose Alvillar
Statewide Director of Youth Programs
Unidos MN