



April 23rd, 2025

House Bill 5836– “Our History, Our Schools, Our Future: About Ethnic Studies Bill”

Dear Chair McNamara and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Hello, my name is Simone, and I’m a first-generation Haitian-American student. I’m here today in support of Bill No. 5836, which would make Ethnic Studies a graduation requirement in high schools.

Being exposed to Ethnic Studies has deeply impacted me and shaped how I view my community and identity. For as long as I can remember, the only time my country or community was mentioned in school was in a negative context. Ethnic Studies would allow me to learn about my people in an uplifting way; stories that are too often left out of traditional curricula. American society has shifted into showing Haitian history in a sense of tolerance and acceptance instead-of showing what we went through and why we’re still fighting back. In order for ethnic history to be taught, the problem, fight, and current need to be addressed.

When students are introduced to Ethnic Studies, they gain a deeper understanding of those around them and of themselves. Ethnic Studies uplifts the cultures in our communities and presents them in a meaningful, empowering way. Learning about our diverse backgrounds can bring people together and help build a stronger sense of solidarity.

Again, I urge you to support Bill No. 5836. Ethnic Studies should be a requirement in high schools to ensure all students have access to inclusive and representative education.

Thank you,

Simone
9th grade