

4/1/2021

Dear Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chair Neron and Weber, and Members of the House Education committee,

My name is Jennifer Solis Solano and I am a Latina high school student leader. I'm writing to urge you to support HB-3363-1 because I can assure there are many BIPOC students who are still facing inequalities that are being silenced.

I want to start off by talking about ELD. I along with my fellow hispanic peers, were put into ELD in Elementary school and as a kid we were given zero information for what this program was initially for. We later realized that this was a program to improve our "English" language, however; as we grew up, we looked back and realized how this whole situation was very strange. I know of many Hispanic students that grew up in the U.S since birth, and English was their first language but were still put into this program. I failed to understand why there weren't other students referred to ELD that could've needed the extra help for their English improvement or grammar. After all ELD means "Instruction designed specifically for English Language Learners to develop their listening, speaking, and reading and writing skills in English"(<https://www.colorincolorado.org/glossary/english-language-development-eld>). This shouldn't automatically mean a Latino/Hispanic student.

To continue, a very similar experience occurred in 8th grade; every single 8th grade Hispanic student was referred to join Intercambio. I remember immediately wanting to join this program because it seemed like a fun community with familiar faces. I filled out a long application and went through interviews to be able to join. I went through a long process to unfortunately end up in a room with other students and were told we had been rejected. The leaders of this group had told us they looked over our grades and realized we didn't need the help. I remember being super confused as to why they didn't look over our grades in the first place, instead of automatically telling me to join just because I am Hispanic. I am still confused as to why they didn't refer to different students of different backgrounds of whom I know truly needed the extra help. They ended up wasting mine and many others' time.

Thank you for taking the time to read over my letter and I urge you to vote yes on HB-3363-1.

Thanks,
Jennifer Solis