

May 24, 2021

CACAGNY to Assembly Members: Please Reject Anti-Asian Racist Bill A7510

To: New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Education Members
Cc: New York City State Senators
Re: Assembly Bill A7510 on the SHSAT

Assembly Bill A7510, sponsored by Assembly Member Michael Benedetto, sits in front of you. It would repeal the Hecht-Calandra Act and the race-blind, objective admission test, the SHSAT, that New York City's Specialized High Schools use as sole admission criterion.

Facially, A7510 merely surrenders the State's jurisdiction over Specialized High Schools admissions to the City. But its true intent is to be used as a tool to dismantle the SHSAT:

1) The rationalization for the State to surrender jurisdiction to the City because "no other State tells schools how to admit students" is simply false. Virginia, Illinois, North Carolina, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Oklahoma, South Carolina all have magnet or "Governor's" schools that are under State jurisdiction. Most of these States even *run* the schools, not just control school admissions. New York State itself runs Hunter College Campus Schools in the City. Furthermore, with over 80% of New York State's receipts coming from New York City, the Specialized High Schools are very much New York State's business. One reason families still stay in an increasingly unsafe, family-hostile New York City is the Specialized High Schools and the striving for high academic standards that they stimulate. If anything, the State should mandate more Specialized High Schools!

2) Let's also not forget that in the last legislative session before the pandemic shutdown, the author of this A7510, Assemblyman Benedetto himself, voted for and shepherded through his Education Committee Assemblyman Charles Barron's A2173, a bill that *most vigorously re-asserted* State jurisdiction over Specialized High Schools admissions! Is there a real change of heart? Well, after Assemblyman Barron's A2173 failed, he most damningly told *Chalkbeat* in an October 1, 2019 report that the next strategy to dismantle the SHSAT is to surrender State jurisdiction of Specialized High Schools admissions to the City – exactly what A7510 does!

So let's once and for all put away the see-through conceit that A7510 is just about a surrender of jurisdiction. Everyone knows that A7510 is an undisguised racist attempt to expel Asians from the Specialized High Schools. And it is inconceivably outrageous that at a time like this, when racist thugs scream "*you don't belong here*" while brazenly assaulting Asians on New York City streets in broad daylight, this bill advances the scapegoating narrative that the Specialized High Schools have *too many Asians*, that "*you don't belong here*" in schools either.

If the issue were "too few Blacks and Hispanics" at the Specialized High Schools rather than "*too many Asians*," which is racist, you'd see a bill to *expand* rigorous, accelerated K through 8 education that the City is – to parents' horror – dismantling instead. The bill would also mandate *more* Specialized High Schools in the City. Then, you'd surely get more Blacks and Hispanics into the Specialized High Schools, *not at the expense of Asians*. How about *that*?

We'd be happy to meet you and present you the *facts* about the massive, unconscionable failures in New York City's public schools. For too long, special interests and their professional activist fronts have directed manipulative, narrative-laundering disinformation campaigns at you on the SHSAT. It's time for us grassroots parents to show you the facts. Only from facts will genuine solutions emerge. Without facts, all you get is scapegoating and self-deception. And scapegoating and self-deception are what A7510 is really about. Coming from a place of racist hate, A7510 would solve no problems, and end only in animosity, futility, and ruin. It must be rejected.

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