

Students Matter

Defending students' rights through impact litigation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 28, 2017

MEDIA CONTACT:

Manny Rivera

MRivera@wearerally.com, (323) 892-2080

Students Matter Statement on *CCJEF v. Rell* Oral Argument

HARTFORD, Conn. — Today, the Connecticut Supreme Court heard oral argument in the appeal of education lawsuit, *Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding (CCJEF) v. Rell*, a lawsuit that challenges Connecticut's education and equal protection clauses. The Plaintiffs — a group of students, parents, and the nonprofit organization, CCJEF — argue that the state's formula for allocating education funding is unconstitutional. Though the decision is now under appeal, the Hartford Superior Court previously found the state's formula for distributing education aid unconstitutional.

Jessica Martinez, lead Plaintiff in the Connecticut federal education equity and adequacy lawsuit [Martinez v. Malloy](#), sponsored by national nonprofit organization Students Matter, issued the following statement in response to today's oral arguments:

"The arguments raised today highlight the inequality in Connecticut's education system. The State of Connecticut must do more to ensure that its students have access to quality public schools by eliminating barriers that infringe upon the Constitutional rights of Connecticut children.

"The issues surrounding education equity and adequacy in the State's public schools also underscore the importance of Students Matter's federal education lawsuit, *Martinez v. Malloy*. *Martinez v. Malloy* challenges anti-opportunity laws that restrict students' access to quality public schools, disproportionately hurting students in urban communities and contributing to the widespread inequality in Connecticut's education system.

"It's time for the state of Connecticut to strike down these harmful laws and restrictions, to ensure that every student — regardless of background — has access to a quality public education."

On August 23, 2016, a group of Connecticut students and parents filed *Martinez v. Malloy*, a federal lawsuit against the State of Connecticut challenging a set of state anti-opportunity laws and policies that restrict access to quality public school options, in U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut with the support of Students Matter.

Throughout Connecticut and across the country, many public schools — including magnet, traditional and charter public schools — are delivering a world-class education to students of all backgrounds. Unfortunately, the State of Connecticut has passed and continues to enforce state laws and policies that essentially shut the doors to these quality public school options, contributing to one of the largest

achievement gaps in the nation and denying the state's most vulnerable students access to the equal opportunity they deserve.

To learn more about Martinez v. Malloy, please visit studentsmatter.org/case/martinez/press-kit/.

###

*Students Matter is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting access to quality public education through impact litigation, communications and advocacy.
Learn more at studentsmatter.org.*