

**Testimony of Linda Cruz Catalan**  
**Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**  
**November 4, 2015**

Hello,

My name is Linda Cruz Catalan and I am currently enrolled in the Field School in Washington DC. At Field I have had the opportunity to learn, create, and build connections that will last me years and years to come. I am extremely lucky to be going to the Field School itself. I have always come from a low income family. My parents work extremely hard to pay for clothes, food, and the town house we live in. They are the two hardest working people I know today and they are extremely resilient. In my mind they have always been the pure image of what it means to make something out of nothing.

Before Field, I went to a school called Oyster Adams Bilingual School. This school was a very good stepping stone in my life and I was exposed to a lot of cultures/backgrounds. Besides seeing kids from middle class families who could afford a high school education for their children, I also saw kids who were from lower income families like mine. These kids usually went on to the local high school which was next in line for them if they didn't either pay for a private school education or take advantage of programs and scholarships to get them there. I saw that a lot of these kids had multiple problems meaning that a large public high school wouldn't be beneficial for them at all.

At the time I was associated with a program that gives underprivileged kids these opportunities called "D.C Opportunity". They helped me and gave me many opportunities, biggest one being the opportunity to go to the Field School. A program

called “DC Opportunity” awarded me with a \$12,000 scholarship to attend the school of my choice. Since 2004 there have been 16,000 children that have applied for this opportunity in the Washington DC area and I was one of the 6,100 extremely grateful and lucky kids to receive it.

So far, throughout my lifetime I have seen many underprivileged kids that come from lower class homes/families have no opportunity given to them like I have. Most of these kids are extremely smart and deserve a big future where they can get educated in any institution they choose. I recommend that kids enroll in all the programs I went into similar to “D.C. Opportunity. I currently am interested in math, programming, engineering, and dance. I wish to explore these things far into my future without anybody telling me I cant just because of my background and socio- economic class. If it wasn’t for these many programs I wouldn’t have been able to explore all of these at The Field School and have the amazing privilege to explore them throughout the college of my choosing. Eventually, I wish to have a fruitful career in any one of these fields and I am confident that I can do so.

Linda Cruz Catalan