

March 14, 2012
Sharray Perry
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Honorable Senators and Representatives

My name is Sharray Perry; I am a Graduate student attending the University of Connecticut

I am here today to testify on Bill # 334, AN ACT CONCERNING DESECRATION OF PROPERTY

I am in support of this legislation and would hope that you will also support it

The proposed amendment on Bill # 334 will strengthen the criminal penalties associated with desecration of property. Such crimes committed are now classified as class A misdemeanors, acceptance of this amendment will allow such crimes committed to be classified as class D felonies.

My primary interest of Bill # 334 is section (d) which states "Any person who places a noose or a simulation thereof on any public property or on any private property without the written consent of the owner, and with intent to intimidate or harass any other person on account of religion, national origin, alienage, color, race, sex, sexual orientation, blindness or physical disability, shall be in violation"

The U.S. Department of Justice reports in 2009 approximately 200 crimes were committed in Connecticut relating to bias motivation of race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity and disability.

From the school year beginning in 1999, until the school year ending in 2003 I was a student at Manchester High School. I was an above average student. I participated in several after school extra curriculum activities. I was ambitious and although I knew racism existed I had never personally felt its effects. One day someone decided to vandalize the restrooms and stairwells with derogatory and threatening comments regarding African Americans. As an African American I felt threatened and unsafe. This incident had a negative impact on the atmosphere of Manchester High School, not because some ignorant person decided to vandalize but because school officials did nothing to address the incident. Nine years later I remember my feelings of disappointment with the non-action on behalf of school officials.

Accepting this amendment will express the state of Connecticut will not accommodate any acts of racism or destruction of property.

Desecration of any property, public or private, relating to bias motivation or otherwise should not be tolerated and should have a consequence of a felony conviction.

I appreciate the opportunity to present my testimony.

I would be very happy to answer any questions at this time