



State of Connecticut

African-American Affairs Commission

State Capitol

210 Capitol Avenue – Room 509

Hartford, CT 06106

860-240-8555

Appropriations Committee
Room 2700, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

February 18, 2013

Dear Representatives:

Governor Malloy proposes in his current biennial budget to combine the Connecticut State Legislative Commissions – the African-American Affairs Commission, the Asian Pacific American Affairs, the Commission on Children, the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women – into a single Commission for Citizen Advocacy that includes the LGBT community, and abolish the Commission on Aging.

The estimated savings through this proposed cost-saving measure is less than .0003% of the biennial budget.

The African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) believes that the proposal and its budgetary implications would disserve the priorities and wellbeing of African-Americans.

The AAAC links the General Assembly and the Executive Branch to the African-American community, which is manifested through the execution of its duties in addressing the educational, health, economic, civil rights and political wellbeing of the African-American community – a function it has performed in the past fifteen years.

The AAAC has had half of its staff eliminated less than three years ago, but continued to dispense its functions that positively improve the quality of life of African-Americans and residents of the State. The Commission has helped reduce the educational achievement gap by making it possible for several thousands of first generation and low-income students to gain access to higher education and financial aid. The AAAC has helped identify health disparities and provided policy makers with cogent recommendations to improve the quality of life for all residents. The AAAC has led the battle to amend the Penn Act and prohibit racial profiling in traffic stops.

Our Mission

To improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut

Each of the affected Commissions has leveraged several millions of dollars to the state from federal and foundation sources annually. The AAAC was pivotal in securing \$1.2M federal dollars for racial profiling prohibition. The Governor's proposal will jeopardize these and other future accomplishments of the Commissions.

A brief overview of the AAAC's accomplishments in the areas of education, health equity, civil and judicial rights, employment/economic development, and the recognition of African-American heritage are chronicled below.

Education

- Implemented and administered KnowHowToGo-CT the national program to increase the percentage of adults with college degrees in Connecticut to 60% by 2025 by increasing access to higher education to first generation and low income students.
- Implemented and administered College Goal Sunday – CT. For six years more than 4,000 high school students and their families have completed their FAFSA forms thus becoming eligible for post-secondary financial aid and scholarships.
- Provided voice to educational issues including graduation requirements, recruitment and hiring of minority teacher, review of inter-district grants, educational reform and STEM enrichment.

Health Equity

- Chairs the Public Voice Committee for the Commission on Health Equity. This has been essential in addressing issues in health equity through community and faith based organizations.
- Member of American Red Cross Diversity and Inclusion that actively supports increasing participation of African-Americans as blood donors.
- Actively involved with addressing health disparities (hypertension, cancer, obesity, low birth weight, diabetes, sickle cell, organ and tissue donation and mental illness) in the African-American community.

Civil and Judicial Rights

- Serves on the Commission for Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System.
- Had a pivotal role in amending the Penn Act – Racial Profiling Prohibition in Traffic Stop.

Employment/Economic Development

- Participant in the DAS Disparities Study with the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering.
- Assisted in the establishment of the United States And Africa Development Organizations, which has led to the establishment of international relations with African nations including the Nigerian National Assembly Service Commission.

Recognition of African-American Heritage

- Coordinated the 150 Anniversary of the Emancipation of the Proclamation at the Capitol.
- Annual Classic Awards celebrating and recognizing the accomplishment of African-Americans and providing more than \$30,000 in scholarship awards to deserving students for post-secondary education.

Yours truly,

**Canterbury,
Dennis
(Sociology)**

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Commissioner Prof. Dennis C. Canterbury, PhD
State of Connecticut African American Affairs Commission