

**TESTIMONY OF LEROY GARDNER BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 19, 2013'**

My name is Leroy Gardner. I AM A BLACK MAN. I am from Norwich, CT. I would like to start by thanking all the Committee Members for their time in reviewing my testimony. Thank You.

The Chief Reason behind this country's success is based on its' origins in allowing for diverse ethnicities to immigrate here from other countries, yet still maintain the identity of their respective cultures and races; "Their Voice", so to speak. So profound and unique was this concept, that this country, early-on , garnered the nickname of "*The Great Melting Pot*", with even that phrase, eventually evolving, and coming to be termed as "*The Great Salad Bowl*".

What occurred, is that Sociologists ultimately arrived at the conclusion , that it was not so much that the different cultures homogenized themselves together, thus making for a "Harmonious", "Flavorful" blending of the races, but rather instead, is was the same mixture process seen in the making of a salad. This created the dynamic of a galvanizing force in this country which translated into great achievements in the arenas of Commerce, Technology, and Political Autonomy for of this countries inhabitants. So therefore, accordingly, it would serve well, for the present day, State of Connecticut, to duplicate this process.

At this point, it is obvious, the parallels that I am trying to make with our past history and to whatever continued blueprint that this country must still follow in order to maintain its' status as a World Leader, (and also our state, at its own level). What critical feature that I feel must be pointed out though, in order to facilitate this process, more easily, it is necessary for continued assistance of culturally specific agencies within this state, such as the **AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION**(and the **like**) In maintaining this proven, successful approach, the State of Connecticut can continue with the level of access and communication to the African-American Community, that will maximize any state dollars, misspent, elsewhere to do this.

The **AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION** has repeatedly shown itself to be the only highly effective liaison to access Federal Grant Monies earmarked exclusively for African-American Issues, such as the 1.2 million dollars in Federal Money they helped procure for Racial Profiling Prohibition Surveying(again, thus saving the State of Connecticut the burden of this expense). Additionally the **AAAC** addresses other important matters and concerns that directly effect the African-American Community, such as critical issues like: **Achievement Gaps in Education, Racial Profiling, Tuition Assistance**, etc. Some might say that there is no actual need for a specific African-"American" Spokes-group, per se, since there isn't the standard language barrier that many other Non-English Speaking Minority Groups encounter that create obstacles for them in communicating their concerns effectively. Yet, there is no denying that an appropriate "Ethnic-Based Staffed" office of administrators can do better in directly empathizing with the plight of the group they represent, and thus be more effective in the championing of the causes of their constituents before the legislative body.

Finally, yes there is a direct number that can be placed on the cost savings in this possible consolidation of the various Legislative "Ethnic" Commissions. It is less than .0003% of the Biennial Budget, This is hardly a significant enough amount of money to justify the resultant costly damage done to the self worth and esteem of the various minority groups, due to their sense of loss at not having their cultural heritage acknowledged or respected.

**Leroy Gardner**