

TO: Senator Beth Bye & Representative Toni Walker

FROM: Ann Pratt, Director of Organizing, CT Citizen Action Group

RE: Support of the African American Affairs Commission

Date: February 19, 2016

I want to thank Senator Beth Bye and Representative Toni Walker for the opportunity to submit testimony from CT Citizen Action Group(CCAG) expressing our energetic and enthusiastic support for the African American Affairs Commission (AAAC). Like many states across the country, Connecticut suffers from racial inequities in economic well-being, educational equity, access to quality health care and overall access to communities of opportunity for African American individuals and families. Connecticut not only benefits from, but is in urgent need of the continued work and presence of the AAAC, whose mission of improving and promoting economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African American community could not be more relevant and important as it is today.

Over the past two years, CCAG has worked in partnership and collaboration with the gifted and dedicated staff of the AAAC, from our work to pass a Student's Bill of Rights establishing a Student Ombudsman program which will help protect Connecticut's students from predatory student loan practices, to working to eliminating discriminatory employment practices through advancing "Fair Chance"/ "Ban the Box" legislation, to exposing the abusive and deceptive debt collection practices that specifically target and impact African American communities the most. AAAC's role in convening, facilitating and offering public policy support have been invaluable to advancing the state's commitment to racial and economic equity and justice. CCAG shares AAAC's the vision and commitment to eliminating racial inequity in Connecticut, and strongly urges the Appropriations Committee to continue its support and investment in this essential asset for state. We want to also include the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, the Latino Puerto Rican Affairs Commission in our support and encouragement for you to continue your investments.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Ann Pratt  
Director of Organizing  
CT Citizen Action Group

The mission of the Commission is to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut through advocacy, information sharing, cultural awareness, community networking and influencing legislation.