



CEO

Commission on Equity and Opportunity

18-20 Trinity Street • Suite 202 • Hartford, CT 06106 • (860) 240-1424 (o) • 860-240-1476 (f)
www.cga.ct.gov/ceo

Government Administration and Elections Committee

15 February 2017

Testimony **FOR Senate Bill 482: An Act Concerning the Preparation of Racial and Ethnic Impact Statements**

Greetings Senator Winfield, Senator McLachlan, Representative Fox, and members of the General Administration and Elections Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly,

My name is Alok Bhatt. I serve as Policy Analyst for the Commission on Equity and Opportunity, a nonpartisan entity within the General Assembly charged with informing policymakers on issues impacting the civil rights, economic advancement, education, employment, health, and housing of people of color in Connecticut.

In facilitating our duty to the Connecticut General Assembly, we write in strong support of Senate Bill 482: An Act Concerning the Preparation of Racial and Ethnic Impact Statements.

Quite often in the halls of structural power, the officials afforded such power make decisions without regard, or in adverse consideration, of the people whom their decisions impact. Each legislative session, myriad proposals in the Connecticut General Assembly attack fair housing, increase penalties for criminal offenses, discriminate against immigrants and their families, and otherwise target people of color. While these proposals often assume the guise of 'public safety', 'maintaining local aesthetics', and other such ostensibly beneficial causes, they ultimately represent the systematic racism and other prejudices that perpetuate inequity and diminish overall well-being in the State of Connecticut.

Racial and ethnic impact statements crafted by nonpartisan entities would provide at least minimal perspective into how some decisions made in the Connecticut General Assembly effect those most impacted, but often least considered.

In fulfilling our charge, CEO would appreciate any opportunity for involvement in the creation and dissemination of racial and ethnic impact statements. Furthermore, as nonpartisan staff to the Connecticut General Assembly, we avail ourselves to all legislators and staff to discuss and address racial and ethnic impact statements.

We appreciate your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Alok Bhatt
Policy Analyst, Commission on Equity & Opportunity