I would like to thank the Public Health committee leadership and members for providing me with the opportunity to comment in support of SB 465, which ensures that race, ethnicity and language (“REL”) information is collected uniformly and the data made publicly available in the disaggregate by agencies, boards and commissions for the purposes of addressing disparities in the health care and public health systems. The ability to look at data in subgroups by race, ethnicity and language will help us better understand the disparities, plan targeted interventions and track health outcomes for all of Connecticut’s residents. This bill will support our city’s effort to address issues of health inequities.

According to a recent report from Connecticut Voices for Children, “wide disparities by race and ethnicity dominate the state’s health care system” and that “closing these disparities has proven difficult in part because state agencies lack consistent, reliable data to identify community needs and evaluate innovations, with serious consequences both for the impacted communities and the state as a whole.”

The Bridgeport Department Health & Social Services aims to promote and protect the health of the people of Bridgeport through the provision of essential health services, monitoring of programs, enforcement of laws and ordinances, and collection of health information. Promoting health equity and eliminating health disparities is a priority for our department.

The reporting of data to the CT Office of Policy and Management makes the data publicly available through the open data portal so that researchers and others can track and identify trends to reduce health disparities. Several states have included the collection of race, ethnicity and language data into their laws, regulations, or ordinances including California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Oregon. Connecticut has an opportunity to be a national leader.

As a result, our lack to have uniform data collection on race, ethnic, and language data, people are currently resulting on people living with and dying from health conditions that are avoidable and we are missing them. This is evident because we cannot see them in our data trends. Missing them because we are not targeting our interventions to their needs. In order for
everyone to achieve their optimal health, we have to see them, see them in the data, and address their specific health needs.

Please support SB 465 and ensure that every Connecticut resident, regardless of their race, ethnicity or primary language can obtain equitable quality healthcare.

Thank you for your support. For additional information, please contact me at (203) 576-7680

Respectively Submitted by,

Maritza Bond, MPH
Director of Health & Social Services
City of Bridgeport
999 Broad St.
Bridgeport, CT 06604