

Dear Members of the Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly,

My name is Tareonna Alger-Rodriguez. I am a student at New London High School in New London, Connecticut and I am here as a member of Hearing Youth Voices. I am here in full support of Bill 7082 and Bill 7083 with Students for Educational Justices' Amendments. This bill is important to me because growing up in a predominately black and brown community, where educators don't look like us, I grow worried about what we see you there actually being taught. Not only does the faculty stand racially disproportionate to the student body, but the curriculum continues to highlight Eurocentric power in history. This bill is important to me because growing up in a predominately black and brown community, where educators don't look like us, I grow worried about what we, as youth, are actually being taught. Both Black and Latino history go unnoticed, and the very few times there acknowledged, only negative narratives are portrayed. With courses that put our history at the forefront, students become more motivated and more empowered. As a young Latina, I have been fortunate to rise above the odds that were set out for me. As I plan to attend college this fall, I reflect on my experiences and wonder why I've had to learn about my culture through family and friends and not in my classrooms. Why has college become the goal to reach in order to see myself and my peers represented? Passing bills HB7082 and HB7083 will spark change beyond our classrooms it is time that we empower our black and brown youth and it starts with our education.

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Thank you for your time,

Tareonna Alger-Rodriguez