



Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut (JFACT)

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PLEASE SUPPORT HB 7082 - AAC THE INCLUSION OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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My name is Michael Bloom and I am the Executive Director of JFACT which is an advocacy organization that represents the 7 Jewish Federations across Connecticut. We advocate on issues of importance to the Jewish community.

In early January of this year, I had the pleasure of helping lead an Interfaith Civil Rights Mission to Selma, Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama. The mission was many things; educational, inspiring, but also frightening to see that such acts of terror could take place on American soil. We walked over the Edmund Pettis Bridge, the site of Bloody Sunday. We visited Kelly Ingram Park where kids were firehosed and dogs were used to terrorize. As we visited the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, there was a memorial wall which stood out to me. It reads;

For the hanged and beaten.

For the shot, drowned and burned.

For the tortured, tormented and terrorized.

For those abandoned by the rule of law.

We will remember.

With hope because hopelessness is the enemy of justice.

With courage because peace requires bravery.

With persistence because justice is a constant struggle.

With faith because we shall overcome.

JFACT supports this crucial legislation because at the center of JFACT are the core values of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) and Tzedek (Justice). Topics such as slavery, lynchings, voting restrictions and the Civil Rights movement must be taught in all schools. For us to move forward and be a closer society, we need to learn and discuss the past, even if it is tough. On this trip, I learned that slavery did not end, it just evolved. Our current and future students need to learn that as well.

In closing, we must not forget those hanged and terrorized. We must push forward with this legislation because the struggle is not over. JFACT respectfully requests that you support this very important piece of legislation.