

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

My name is Nataliya Braginsky, I am a teacher at Metropolitan Business Academy in New Haven, CT. I am a member of New Haven Educator's Collective, and I support Bill7082 with Students for Educational Justice's amendments.

This bill is important to me, because after teaching in public schools for over 10 years, I recognize how critical it is to center the histories of people of color in this country. My own public school education in the suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio was very much focused on white histories, which left me and my peers deeply mis-educated about the history of this country. African Americans built this country, and students of all races need to be aware of that. African American history is American history.

All students need to be taught about how this country -- sadly but truly -- is built on the foundation of racism. We will never eradicate racism in our society if we do not first acknowledge the truth of its history and its impact on us all. This involves teaching how race was developed, and including histories of various people of color (including Latinx people, Native Americans, and Asian-Americans) in addition to Black history.

In order to do this successfully teachers must be trained properly and must participate in anti-racism trainings. I have personally partaken in several such trainings and they have had a significant impact on myself and my teaching. It has been shown time and time again that all people hold biases, unless they are educated and trained to unlearn them, or at least to become self aware and not act on them. As many of our schools that serve students of color are filled with white teachers, it is vital that all teachers receive this training. Even teachers of color and schools with predominantly white students need such trainings, because racism impacts all of us, in some cases as oppression and in other cases as privilege.

In conclusion, I support a bill to require the History of Race and The History of Racism in the United States in the CT curriculum, along with required racial bias trainings for social studies teachers and administrators, and the creation of a curriculum-building Committee within the State Dept of Ed that would include teachers, experts on critical race theory, and students.

Thank you for your time,

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