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Chairman McCrory, Chairman Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today. My name is Fabian Bramwell and I am a 7-12 science teacher at Global Communications Academy. I am also an Educators for Excellence – Connecticut member. I am pleased to submit testimony in favor of [House Bill 7082, An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African American Studies in Public School Curriculum](#) and [House Bill 8083, An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies in Public School Curriculum](#).

Students learn best when they have people they can empathize with. When I was a student, my teachers did not understand. They felt American history was the only necessary history in public education needed to foster national consciousness. As such, they never taught other histories like Guyanese history. How can a student contribute to and grow the national culture if that student doesn't know their own culture? All of my students are African American or Puerto Rican. Although it is great that some teachers in Hartford take it upon themselves to teach students culturally responsive curriculum, I often see students hold a depreciated sense of self-worth primarily because they know nothing positive of their social identity. They know nothing to be proud of which makes them think they have nothing to be proud of. A lack of self-worth can make students of color feel disconnected from school and unmotivated to obtain positive grades.

In Connecticut, students of color makeup over 40 percent of the student population. Despite these rapidly growing numbers, our classrooms are lacking culturally relevant curricula. The growing diversity of our student population requires all teachers to be equipped with tools for delivering curricula and instruction that represents all of our students. If we want students of color to seek out teaching as a viable profession, it is imperative we provide them with curricula that is respectful of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

I look forward to seeing these bills move forward throughout the legislative session. We can and must take immediate and long-term steps to engage our students of color and help them reach their full potential through the diverse curricula provided to them.

Thank you.  
Fabian Bramwell  
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