

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

My name is Shane Brooks, I am a Student at Science & Technology Magnet High School and New London High School. I am from New London and I am a member of Hearing Youth Voices. I support Bill 7082 with SEJ's amendments. This bill is important to me because knowing your history gives importance and a sense of identity and self worth.

Going to a public school with a lack of African American studies being taught in school system made me feel irrelevant and unheard. Having this bill pass will not just expand African Americans knowledge but other races as well and they can learn from this history. According to the Connecticut State Department of Education in 2018 91% of the teachers are white and only 3.7% are black. Having teachers that look like me is very empowering to the sense that I can relate on a different level and empathize the same struggle. Going to a predominately black & hispanic school and having all WHITE teachers has been very difficult because I can't relate to them and I have to listen to their white ideology. The history of Racism should be a discussion of the curriculum because America was founded on racism which still affects African Americans to this day and people have to understand how the problem operates before the solution is giving out. I want students to have a sense of pride and honor when taking this course and use whatever they learn in the classroom applicable to life. Financial Literacy should be taught in this course by black business people to explain that ownership is the key to psychological freedom.

The African American bill won't just teach about the past but will expand knowledge on improving the black community with education, finances, self love and positive imaging. only 37% of teens save their money. Many the youth barely have a savings or even bank accounts at all, which is troublesome. Financial stress is literally the worst, so if youth, especially black and

brown aren't taught how to manage money early then we could never build a financially successful community.

Thank you for your time,

Shane Brooks