

March 5, 2019

Dear State Legislators,

Regarding: **HB7082: AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

I am a parent of three children enrolled in New Haven Public Schools and I myself am a graduate of Connecticut public education, having been raised in Thompson. I fully support the act being presented for your consideration and ask that it be passed, along with all of the amendments proposed by the group Students for Educational Justice.

As an adult, I can now clearly reflect on my own education and see what a glaring lack of knowledge was presented to me on the true history of this country, most especially when it comes to the legacy of race and racism in America. I do not want my children to have to grow up and undo what they learned, as I have had to do. I do not want my children to have to re-educate themselves on white supremacy and learn, on their own, the role that racial inequity has played in creating the foundations of our country. I want them to learn now, as children, the connections between slavery, Jim Crow, mass incarceration, redlining, health treatment disparities, economic discrimination, educational disadvantages and police brutality and how deeply unfair and far reaching all of these historical platforms are to African-Americans. I grew up with a curriculum that taught that white people are the glorious “founders” of this country, that slavery was a moral hiccup that we have somehow atoned for (without actually doing much of anything) and that slavery’s legacy has no connection to any modern day social issues. We must do better.

African-American history is AMERICAN history. It is OUR history and it is so much more than just the legacy of slavery and discrimination. It needs to be fully integrated into our curriculums, not trotted out every February and then resigned away. A friend, Hillary Bridges, sums up perfectly what is needed: - “that along with the teaching of African-American studies, we need to include 1. The history of *race* and *racism* in this country 2. Teachers who have participated in anti-racism trainings 3. A committee of teachers, students, and critical race theory experts to ensure that the teaching of this material and the trainings are effective.”

I want this for my children, I want this for all Connecticut children. I want it for all Connecticut adults, and frankly, for every adult in our country. Especially for my fellow white Americans, as we tend to be the most ignorant of the radical racial inequities that have shaped every pillar of the United States. White supremacy is insidious and in order to help root it out, we need to teach a true history of our country.

This act has my full support and I appreciate your consideration of my opinion.

With gratitude,

Kerry Brown,

Licensed Clinical Social Worker and New Haven Public School Parent