

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

My name is Jeremy Cajigas, I am a the Lead School Organizer for the Citywide Youth Coalition from New Haven. I support Bill 7082 with SEJ'S amendments.

As a former student of the New Haven Public School system it was very hard to sit through history classes and just listen to the white washed version of history was very hard to sit through. I remember often when I would question teachers on certain historical events and bring actual facts to prove their counts wrong It would turn into me getting kicked out of class for challenging the curriculum. Having teachers that are culturally insensitive has played into this culture where we do not honor the history of others but white americans in this country.

I am also the creator of Black and Brown Camp here in Connecticut and I can just recall the day we actually sat down to focus on the history of black and brown queer folks in the united states and how shocked our campers were to learn all the great things our people have contributed to the world. It was once again a sign to how broken our education system is. It highlighted the lack of diversity but also the lack representation people of color have within our education system all the way from our schools administration to our curriculums.

It's also important to note that we can not address African american studies without addressing the reality of race and racism in the united states. Tackling this through the lens of race and racism will allow us the opportunity to create and more diverse and inclusive curriculum while also facing the truth that comes with our history.

I know having this bill pass will mean so much to students of color across the state to be able to see them self represented correctly within our curriculum. However for this bill to be as impactful as we would like it to be we need a committee within the state education department that is actually doing the work and making sure that the curriculum is properly implemented across the state.

. We Are Calling For:

1. The bill to require The History of Race and The History of Racism in the United States in the CT curriculum
2. Required racial bias trainings for social studies teachers and administrators
3. the creation of a curriculum-building Committee within the State Dept of Ed that would include teachers, experts on critical race theory, and students

Why include The History of Race and The History of Racism in the United States?

Including this additional content will help students learn:

1. African American history = American history
2. The history of the creation of the concepts of "race," whiteness, and anti-Blackness
3. The role racism played in the formation of the United States
4. about their ethnicities and countries of origin, and how their ethnicities came to fit in the American conception of race

AND will help us ensure that the delivery of the content is effective, high-quality, and consistent with the vision of the law and the needs of our constituents.

Thank you for your time,

*Jeremy Cajigas*