



EDUCATORS
FOR EXCELLENCE
CONNECTICUT

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**Testimony of Andréa Comer, Executive Director, E4E-CT
before the
CT General Assembly's Education Committee
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Good afternoon, Chairman McCrory, Chairman Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Andréa Comer, and I am the Executive Director of Educators for Excellence-Connecticut. We are a teacher-led organization that aims to address student outcomes and ensure that teachers have a voice at policymaking tables.

Growing up, I had few opportunities in school to learn about the history of Black and Brown people beyond slavery and the colonization of the United States. I was fortunate to have parents who ensured I had an understanding of the significant contributions of African Americans, Central Americans and indigenous peoples to our nation and our world.

For this reason, I proudly support [House Bills 7082](#) and [7083](#), which would broaden students' understanding of history to include African American and Latino cultures. Students of all hues would benefit from a deeper knowledge of the journeys, challenges and accomplishments of people who look like them - and those who do not.

Eurocentrism in history and social studies has been the norm for far too long, and the lack of diversity at the state and federal levels is not only pervasive but harmful. I have always believed that kids cannot be what they do not see. By limiting their exposure to their own rich history, we are hindering their ability to learn what they might become.

Imagine how many young Black girls might have pursued STEM had they been taught about Katherine Johnson, who calculated flight trajectories for NASA. How many more Boricua civil rights leaders might we see in our midst had students known about Jose Julian Acosta? How many more female attorneys of color might be in courtrooms had they been taught about Eunice Carter, the Black female attorney who built the strategy that brought down mobster Lucky Luciano? Might we have more pilots of color had the influence of the Tuskegee airmen been part of the state's curricula? Might our number of Latino educators have been boosted had students known about Ramon Betances?

The list of gifts from Black and Brown people is endless. The value of students learning about these gifts in the classroom is priceless. Let's make sure our beautiful students receive these gifts by passing House Bills 7082 and 7083.

Thank you.

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