

Connecticut General Assembly
Education Committee
State Capitol, Hartford, CT 06106
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Dear Members of the Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Marlyse Duguid. I am a resident of Sandy Hook, Connecticut. I support Bill 7082 with the Students for Educational Justice's (SEJ) amendments. This bill is important to me because I am an educator and a parent who sees how white supremacy continues to manifest in our educational systems today and I love Connecticut and want us to do better.

I grew up in Avon, an affluent, predominantly white suburb. I myself am a white woman. I went through the public-school system having never been taught by a non-white teacher and never thinking or learning about any issues around race or the history of race. Why I have no reason to think that any of my teachers or my school system were purposely racist when you are surrounded by "color-blind" people it is easy to never be taught the history and realities around race and racism. This is a major disservice, as a highly educated person I am embarrassed by how little I know around American History, specifically the parts of our history that include the race relations and racism. This ignorance has had a direct effect on my ability to be a good citizen, educator, and parent.

I would like to think that the schools of 30 years ago were different and that we are in a much more inclusive and progressive world, but unfortunately this is not the case. One of my children is in 2nd grade in Sandy Hook, CT. Our suburb is a little bit more diverse in the student body than the schools of my youth, but still there is not a single teacher of color in my son's elementary school. My son had his first history lesson on colonial Connecticut this year. He came home with a scholastic book on what life was like in colonial times. According to that book the experience of all people in colonial times was that of the White Christian. Not once in that book, or the rest of his section, or the associated field trip was there any mention of the enslaved African peoples forced to help build these communities, nor the indigenous peoples we removed to develop our towns. Watching a white narrative of history continue in our school curriculum in 2019 has been an eye-opening and disappointing part of being a parent. This revisionist curriculum is not doing our children any favors.

Passing Bill 7082 with SEJ's amendments will be a major benefit for Connecticut students. Requiring teaching the History of Race and The History of Racism in the United States in the CT curriculum will help our students be better members of an increasingly diversified citizenry and help to promote equity in our towns and cities. Required racial bias trainings for teachers and administrators will protect our students and help our teachers become better educators and advocates. Ultimately, this bill will help Connecticut's school systems become much better than they already are.

I hope you see that the benefits of this bill are not just that students from under-represented groups would be safer and more included, but that ALL our students and teachers would benefit. Connecticut has a chance to make a decision that puts our students, teachers, and citizens ahead.

Thank you for your time,



Marlyse C. Duguid, PhD