

The Connecticut State Conference of NAACP Branches Stands in Support of House Bill 7082: An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African American Studies in the Public School Curriculum

I am a member of The National Board of Directors of the NAACP, and for the record the NAACP at the National level has partnered with, Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.), US Reps. Bobby Scott (D-Va.) and Don Beyer (D-Va.), and the Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus Rep. G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.) to introduce the 400 Years of African American History Act. This National bill would establish a commission to plan programs and activities across the country to recognize the arrival and influence of Africans and their descendants in America since 1619. The commission would be charged with highlighting the resilience and contributions of African Americans, as well as acknowledging the painful impact that slavery and other atrocities have had on our nation. At the National Level we have supported those efforts and on the State Level in Connecticut we support the House Bill 7082 An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African American Studies in the Public School Curriculum.

The 400-year history of African Americans is full of tragedies that have shaped the black experience in America and should be remembered as moral catastrophes. However, that is not the whole story of African-American history. African Americans have contributed to the economic, academic, social, cultural and moral well-being of this nation.

Without African Americans, some of America's greatest achievements would not have been possible. Would American moral leadership be as strong without Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr. Malcolm X or Thurgood Marshall? Would American literature be as prolific without the giants of the Harlem Renaissance? Would American music have conquered the world without pioneers like Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Marian Anderson, Billie Holiday, James Brown, Michael Jackson Beyonce and Prince?

Could we claim America as the most innovative nation on earth without the invention of the modern Traffic Light, the perfection of the Electric Microphone in which we are all using today during this hearing? Most of America's most innovative inventions were made by African Americans, and their ideas were stolen from Slave Masters, who took the credit for the inventions and stole the profits from their so called indentured servants. African-American discoveries are American discoveries. Without the accomplishments of African Americans, the United States could not boast to be the most powerful country in the world. Could you imagine Professional Sports in America without African Americans in Boxing, Basketball, Baseball, Football, Track and Field and other forms of lucrative Entertainment? Could you imagine America's Farming and Agricultural Industry without African Americans? What would America's Manufacturing Industry look like? How would America look without its massive

transportation infrastructure? Would its railroads, highways, airports, navigational systems, marine docks and bridges/tunnels look the way they are today without the contributions of African Americans? We Say Absolutely Not!!!

As we look over the challenges and injustices that African Americans still face, we can't forget the tragic way in which African-American history began, and draw inspiration from the heroes and trailblazers who fought under our country's principle that all people are created equal. These civil rights leaders and freedom fighters along with multi millions of Blacks who have worked, created, invented, discovered, lived and died over the past 400 years, have helped build what the United States is today. America would be unrecognizable today without the African American's contributions, and we demand our Credit and Recognition.

You cannot tell the American Story without telling the African American Story, it is impossible. We have influenced every hamlet, town, city, county and State in America. We have participated in every war in which our Ancestors gave their lives to protect the Freedoms of this Country for the last 400 Years. Even though America didn't properly write our Contributions in America's History Books, the NAACP is demanding that Connecticut and the rest of the United States of America properly include African American History in the Public Schools Curriculum. This Act and Bill is well overdue, and we would like to thank Dr. Ben Foster, the former Chairman of the CT NAACP State Education Committee for all of his great work with this initiative, we'd like to thank State representative Bobby Gibson for his efforts, the entire Black & Puerto Rican Caucus, along with all the numerous supporters of this very important Bill; we thank each and every one of you!

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