

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

I am writing in support of HB 7082, An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African-American Studies in the Public School Curriculum and the amendments proposed by SEJ including:

1. The amendment of the bill language to include "The History of Race and The History of Racism in the United States" as required curricular content (in addition to "African American Studies");
2. Required racial bias trainings for social studies teachers and administrators;
3. The creation of a curriculum-building and Oversight Committee within the State Dept. of Ed that would include teachers, experts on critical race theory, and students.

I am a Councilwoman in Hamden and serve as the Chair of the Education Committee. I am a member of a parent group Anti-Bias Anti-Racism and we are in conversation with the Board of Education to develop a more inclusive and culturally sensitive curriculum. The theme for professional development next year will be "Cultural Competency." Hamden is working to close the achievement gap and the disparities in discipline. Our district is 62% students of color. Our curriculum needs to reflect the composition of the district.

The state should set standards for the inclusion of African-American studies. My white children should learn about Black History, Slavery, Racism, and the African-American contributions in the building of our country. I grew up in a mostly white town in Michigan and did not learn about African-American history until I went to college. My education prepared me to succeed in college, but I was not prepared for life. African-American studies needs to be incorporated into the curriculum beginning in preschool.

Best,

Lauren Garrett
Hamden, CT