



Testimony in Support of Connecticut H.B. 7082 and H.B. 7083

***An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African-American Studies
in the Public School Curriculum***

***An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies
in the Public School Curriculum***

Steven Ginsburg, ADL Connecticut Regional Director

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Chairman Sanchez, Chairman McCrory, and Members of the Education Committee, my name is **Steve Ginsburg**, and I am the Director of the Anti-Defamation League’s (“ADL”) Connecticut Regional Office. I submit this testimony today in support of House Bills 7082 and 7083. Last year, ADL was privileged to testify in support of legislation that now requires Connecticut high schools to include Holocaust and genocide education in their social studies curricula. I am here today because we at ADL view House Bill 7082 and 7083 as equally important measures that will help ensure that our real is also taught, reflected upon, and celebrated in Connecticut public schools.

Since 1913, the mission of ADL has been to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” Dedicated to combating anti-Semitism, prejudice, and bigotry of all kinds, as well as defending democratic ideals and promoting civil rights, ADL is proud of its leadership role in developing innovative materials, programs, and services that build bridges of communication, understanding, and respect among diverse racial, religious, and ethnic groups.

At ADL, we have seen first-hand the harm that can be caused by historic ignorance and cultural insensitivity. We are often called in to assist K-12 schools in responding to hate and bias incidents, and in our experience, many of the incidents we respond to are not necessarily issues of hate, but rather of a gap in understanding. Through our anti-bias education programming, we help teach students across the state how to be “upstanders or allies,” rather than bystanders, and how to speak up when they see racism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of bigotry around them. We also lead a Holocaust education program, which helps teachers across the nation introduce students to the complex themes of the Holocaust, and to put the historic tragedy into perspective in a way that can inspire instead of merely overwhelm. This education has proven to be invaluable. Understanding lessons from the past, and teaching students about the strength of our diversity as a nation, is the first step towards building a stronger and healthier multicultural society in the 21st Century. That is why we view H.B. 7082 and 7083 as so important in Connecticut today.

In the event that we are successful and H.B. 7082 is signed into law, ADL looks forward to offering our full support and sharing our experience to help ensure that, similar to those who participate in our Holocaust education program, teachers from a wide range of personal backgrounds not only feel comfortable, but also feel inspired to teach critical lessons about African-American, Puerto Rican and Latino history in ways that resonate with Connecticut’s diverse student body.

We strongly urge the Committee to report H.B. 7082 and 7083 out favorably. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today in support of these critical pieces of proposed legislation.