

## **HB #7082**

**Good afternoon. My name is Donald Harris, Chair of the Bloomfield Board of Education, CABE First Vice President and a proud member of the State Board of Education. I am here to lend support to the HB #7082 “The Inclusion of African American Studies in the Public-School Curriculum”.**

**As a long time educator in the public schools in a Diverse district, I have come to know that what is contained in the history books is not always a true picture of what history was like especially for African Americans. It is a mandate in the public schools that every student must be taught US History. However, within that full year course, there is very little time spent on the issue of Slavery. The horrific stories of the capture of men, women and children from the continent of Africa and bringing those that survived the voyage on the ships to eventually arrive in the United States. The captured people of color had to endure, beatings, raping of our women and children and murder. The Historians know that slavery began in 1619 (300 years ago) and officially ended on December 6th, 1865 with the creation of the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment. This is the information contained within most History books.**

**What is not contained is how African Americans as a race of people have had to live and survive, be recognized in a country that has tried to push them aside. We have a rich and important history that is rarely mentioned: famous African American Inventors, people like**

**Madame CJ Walker – cosmetics and hair care products**

**George Washington Carver – who pioneered numerous uses of peanut products**

**Benjamin Banneker – astronomer, mathematician**

**Charles Drew – pioneered research into blood and blood plasma**

**Garrett Morgan – Developed the traffic light among many inventions**

**There is also the story of Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughn and Mary Jackson who crossed gender and race lines to help launch John Glenn as the first American to orbit the planet three times.**

**There is a large group of African American political leaders both past and present, some elected, some not. Persons like Shirley Chisholm, Barbara Jordan, John Lewis, Barack Obama, Jesse Jackson, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Muhammed Ali, Adam Clayton Powell, Chuck Stone. I could go on and on but suffice it to say that the people of color who identify as African American have a rich and poignant history and I know America would not be what it is today without their contributions.**

**Systemic Racism, segregated neighborhoods, and educational disadvantages is a small portion of what still exists today although slavery officially ended 144 years ago.**

**This 3-minute testimony is but a snap shot of the knowledge of information and excitement that can be generated with the inclusion of HB #7082 for ALL CHILDREN in the State of CT.**