

House Bill 7082

Good morning,

I am writing on behalf of all who believe that African American Studies should be taught in all Public School Curriculum in our state. Currently, I am a Black man who is an administrator in the public school arena in Connecticut. Having been educated in Connecticut private schools(St. Rita's in Hamden) and public schools(Bloomfield High School), I am quite aware of the fact that African American studies is woefully missing in many curriculum across our state and country. I come from a very diverse family culturally as well as professionally, but what I have come to understand is that regardless of the background or job, my family always stressed the importance of understanding our history and from where we've come. Our history does not start with slavery and end with the Obama administration. Quite the contrary. I believe that in order for all of our youth to have a better understanding of themselves as the next generation of global citizens, it is imperative that they get a generous dose of Black history as well as African history. They need schooling that will also address how these two cultures have merged to create the African American experience. Our culture, grit, creativity, and success has been downplayed, muted, or ignored either intentionally or unintentionally for decades. It is now time to amend this oversight. Understanding the relevance of civilizations such as Timbuktu, Egypt and Carthage are equally as important as understanding ancient Greece, Rome, or exploration of Norse lore. We all understand the importance of Black and Brown representation as teachers in classrooms, but what about that same representation being adhered to throughout our district curriculum across the state? That is vital as well. *Both* aide in providing young people with an understanding of who they are(historically), from whence they came, and how a rich and diverse history is a part of their personal landscape. If we deny all children, but particularly our Black children of their history, then how can we truly gain an understanding of our worth as a people? Conversely, if we educate ours as well as others in African American studies, there is a chance that all students will benefit. Just as Black and Brown children have identified European as well as White American historical figures as heroes, they will be able to identify heroes with which they can identify *culturally*. An old African proverb says that it takes a village to raise a child. But within the constructs of this Great American Village, it is our duty to educate all of our children on African American history so that our children can perpetuate, fortify, and globally educate *our* village as a *nation*. In conclusion, I emphatically support House Bill 7082. It is a bill that promotes inclusion as well as validates an entire culture. It is also a bill that is not only needed for children of color but for all children no matter what color, race or creed. Thank you for your consideration in this very, very important matter.

Jamahl Hines