

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

My name is Taylor Hurley, I am a student at Southern Connecticut State University, from North Canaan, Connecticut, and I am a member of the Educational Justice Collective at SCSU. I support Bill7082 with SEJ's amendments. This bill is important to me not only because African American history is American history, but because I do not believe that the racial inequities currently displayed in society can be changed, unless they are explicitly addressed in schools.

I grew up, and live in, a town which is home predominantly to white folks. I can count on one hand the number of children with whom I went through elementary school with (Kindergarten through 8th grade). The number of children of color with whom I attended high school with grew only slightly above this. My education of African American studies was limited to slavery and the most well-known Civil Rights Activists. I did not have to address "race," whiteness, or anti-Blackness until my junior year of college. I believe that, with SEJ's amendments, this bill has the power to begin changing the narrow view young students are being taught of people of color consistently throughout their elementary experience.

It is important to have "the History of Race and the History of Racism in the United States" as part of the curriculum in order to change what students are currently being taught, and ask educators and students alike to consider how what is deeply rooted in American history impacts the racial inequities they see happening around them in society today. It is also important to challenge students who do not have to confront their own whiteness, or perhaps do not recognize the racial inequities that currently exist, to do so.

As a future educator, the content outlined by Bill7082 will positively impact my future as an educator. Part of the mission of Educational Justice Collective is to begin challenging what takes place in schools as a way to address, and begin changing, what occurs in society. Bill7082 would mandate that I more fully address what American history is. Because racial bias trainings would be required, I believe that this will not only positively affect what students are learning, but also encourage practicing educators to challenge their own beliefs, and more fully serve their white students, and their students of color, in teaching them about "race," whiteness, and anti-Blackness. This is a way to begin changing not only the learning that occurs in school around African American studies, but to take the first steps toward an anti-racist curriculum.

Thank you for your time,

Taylor Hurley