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Written Testimony HB7082

Please include my written testimony, in support of the Students for Educational Justice, to the Education Committee in full support of HB-7082 inclusion of African American Studies in our schools.

As a retired white educator committing myself to reducing bias and racism Connecticut schools, I am saddened to see how the State of Connecticut has ignored, neglected and seemingly eliminated the study of Black Americans in our country's history, since Black History **is** the history of the United States. When I taught in the 80's and 90's, all elementary teachers were required to submit their curriculum plans for African History Month and school wide activities were held. Yearly staff development included cultural competency awareness and training. At the time, it seemed to be the first steps to being honest about our history. It now seems to be our last steps.

As the country drifted toward education as a measure of children's skill levels, losing interest in child development, individuality, and creativity; it seems the state also lost direction. Unfortunately, districts overly dependent on the State and its presumed power followed suit, lacking cultural *consciousness* to act independently in their students', and I may add, our countries best interest.

So, I strongly support the efforts of the Youth Coalition and the Students for Educational Justice in their efforts to pass HB7082, History of Race and Racism, as required instruction in the State. I also support all teachers have anti-bias/anti-race training. Recruiting more teachers of color should not be used as a band-aid to cover existing personal and structural bias in our schools.

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