

Email Subject: HB7082-Jessica Isom, MD MPH

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

My name is Dr. Jessica Isom, I am a physician in training at Yale School of Medicine and live in North Haven and I am a supporter of the Students for Educational Justice efforts to promote racial justice in grade school curriculums. I support Bill 7082 with the Students for Educational Justice amendments.

This bill is important to me because I have experienced first hand the lack of education on race and racism in my own primary and secondary educational experiences. As a black student, it was a particularly challenging formative period where my education on African American History was found in the library rather than my own classrooms.

African American History, and the history of all people of color, is just as much a part of American History as what is currently taught in schools. The history taught in the majority of classrooms focuses on the "West" and is predominantly European history.

I wonder what impact this amendment's suggestions would have had in educating my grade school classmates on the history of black people. It may have saved me and others from hearing my uninformed classmates discuss the "gorillas that live in Harlem." It is a painful experience to have your history neglected and the educational gaps left behind be filled with harmful stereotypes and misinformation. I do not blame the classmate that made this racist comment towards me. Instead, I blame the inadequate educational curricular content that fails to value the history of black people and all people of color as much as it values European history.

The role racism has played in the formation of America is essential for all Americans to learn and understand. It is of the utmost importance that it is taught well through formal trainings of all teachers undergoing racial bias training. This will ensure that the delivery of the content is effective, high quality and consistent with the vision of the law and the needs of our constituents.

I support Bill 7082 with the Students for Educational Justice amendments. The students of Connecticut deserve nothing less than a superb education.

Thank you for your time.

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