

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

**My name is *Imani Jean-Gilles*, I am from Bridgeport and I am a member of SEJ/ Hearing Youth Voices/ etc. I support Bill 7082 with SEJ's amendments. This bill is important to me because, making black history mandatory in schools would be a huge step forward for United States to change as a whole in the right direction .**

**We have a narrow view of what U.S history is. The black narrative in the U.S. is constantly skewed and muted. There are only a few events that are used, and that's the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the Civil Rights movement.**

**Two very important events that should get the time they deserve, however black history is so much more than the constant struggle, it's inventors, historians, scientists, and activists that started movements that we are still fighting for til this day.**

**The narrative that is pushed down our throats completely undermines our history and today it strips us of our proud . We as a group are constantly trying to regain that pride in who we once were.**

**Growing up I've heard from teachers that my country, Haiti, was a poor and desolate and had nothing but problems. But my parents taught me better and I always kept my head held high. Imagine other kids who didn't have their pride and heard those discouraging words. They would believe those everything their teachers say and feel ashamed of who they are.**

**Even in high school, in my freshman year history class we skipped over the section about Africa. I asked why and my teacher said it was not as important as the other sections and it was not apart of the curriculum. It was truly disheartening to hear that at age. It's so ironic that I went to a majority black school and there wasn't an emphasis on black or minority history. If there were they were taught as electives, classes by hat most people didn't take. Education can lift up a persons confidence and allow them to move around the world freely. To end racism we must start at the foundation of where it's taught, that begins at school.**

**Thank you for your time,**

*Imani Jean-Gilles*