

March 5, 2019

Members of the Education Committee
State of CT Legislature
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Ave.
Hartford, CT

Dear Honorable Members:

The members of the Epsilon Iota Iota Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. submit this testimony in full support of H.B. No. 7082 An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African-American Studies in the Public School Curriculum.

2019 represents the 400th Anniversary of the arrival of Africans in the country. As such, the history of this country and the history of African-Americans have been interconnected since the founding of this nation. However, public school curriculum in CT schools does a poor job of teaching this history leading to incomplete and misleading narratives about the African-American community.

This does a disservice to all students. The failure to adequately educate all of our school children means that we are offering them a biased and incomplete education and failing to model critical thought and the critical analysis of history that is an essential skill for academic success, college preparation, higher order critical thinking and civic engagement. Additionally, failing to accurately engage students around the history of African-Americans means that we are failing to offer a critical examination of race and racism in this country and the many ways in which white supremacist thinking pervades our society.

Currently 13 states have laws in place to ensure that this history is taught. It is essential that CT become the 14th state. Educators in every school district must be equipped to accurately teach this curriculum. Educators with such expertise must be recruited. School children from Avon to Stonington, Branford to Waterbury must be taught the true US history- a history that is full of the stories of Native peoples, African descendants, Latino and Caribbean descendants as well as the history of European peoples as a part of the regular curriculum - not as an elective course.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. is an international fraternity with over 750 undergraduate and graduate chapters. Founded on November 17, 1911 on the campus of Howard University in Washington DC, Omega Psi Phi's stated purpose has been to attract and build a strong and

effective force of men dedicated to its Cardinal Principles of manhood, scholarship, perseverance, and uplift. Throughout the world, many notable members are recognized as leaders in the arts, academics, athletics, entertainment, business, civil rights, education, government, and science fields. This legacy is carried on 108 years later by chapters all over this country and throughout the world, including in New Haven where Epsilon Iota Iota has served the Greater New Haven community for the past 29 years.

Thank you for your attention to this letter and we look forward to your favorable consideration of H.B. No. 7082 AAC the Inclusion of African-American Studies in the Public School Curriculum.

Sincerely,

Alexander Q. Jones
Basileus, Epsilon Iota Iota

Kevin E. Walton, Sr.
Social Action Chair, Epsilon Iota Iota