

Dear Education Committee,

I am a resident of North Haven and the parent of two children attending the New Haven Public Schools through the interdistrict magnet program. I am writing to testify about HB 7082, calling for the mandatory inclusion of African American Studies in the CT public school curriculum, together with the amendments proposed by Students for Educational Justice.

When I first read the bill a few weeks ago, I was moderately sympathetic but didn't see any urgency to making the teaching of African-American studies or Race and Racism mandatory in our schools. My opinion changed, however, as I engaged in dialog with residents of suburban Fairfield County around the education regionalization bills.

I was shocked by the bias and ignorance displayed by my correspondents, and I now believe that teaching this curriculum is our best chance to educate the young people of these communities so that they grow up with fewer prejudices than their parents. It is important for all students to know the history that brought the country and the state to its current state of segregation and inequality, so that ~ for example ~ the long-term effects of postwar bank red-lining will not continue to be misinterpreted as a differential in how hard residents are willing to work.

I ask the Education Committee to approve HB 7082 with SEJ's amendments.

Thank you for your attention,

Jill Kelly
New Haven Public School Advocates