

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

My name is Emily Lorin, I am a community member from New Haven, CT and I am a member of SEJ. I support Bill 7082 with SEJ's amendments. This bill is important to me because I went to a school completely lacking in this history and can attest to the resulting racist ideologies it instilled in myself and my white peers while perpetuating harm against the few folks of color in my school. We were violently left somewhere between completely ignorant of race and believing blatant, racist lies about our history.

It wasn't until I was an adult that I began to unpack and discover the history of race in America and its relation to my own life; as an adult! I was almost thirty years old when I began to actually wrap my brain around the devastating realities of slavery, the still relatively recent Jim Crow laws and their systemic impacts on all communities. I was counseling and teaching in a predominantly Black and Latinx school in Brooklyn when a more accurate portrayal of America came into view. At almost thirty, my entire life perspective shifted — not due to a death in the family, not a midlife crisis, but due to the death of a false reality and the reckoning of both my own and America's identity.

I support Bill 7082 with SEJ's amendments because I believe the truth is important. I believe the truth is liberating and healing—and our nation, its constitution, institutions and people are in need of healing. The version of history I was taught was false and incomplete — all peoples of America deserve to have their role in the American narrative portrayed, taught and conveyed at every level of education.

In my opinion, having explicitly African American studies, anti-racism education, the History of Race and the History of Racism in the United States included in our curriculum would be nation-changing. This education could radically bridge racial and political divides. It could drastically bring truth to America's narrative. Most importantly, it would allow the majority of students in America the opportunity to learn about themselves, their ethnicity and the value of their people in our nation. Identity is important.

Thank you for your time,  
*Emily Lorin*