

Dear Honorable members,

I, Karimah Mickens Webber the president of the New Haven Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, 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.

Currently 13 states have laws in place to ensure that this history is taught. It is essential that CT become the 14th state. Without the inclusion of the history of all people - African American, Latino, Native, Asian- we are teaching an incomplete history and we are not equipping our students to live in the world. Focusing only on European history, with very limited references to other groups, reinforces white supremacist thinking that is damaging to all students.

400 years ago, the first Africans arrived in North America. There is no United States history that does not include African-Americans. Therefore, our public school curriculum must be rewritten to present a view of history that incorporates the history of all these groups, including an examination of race and racism in an effort to move toward anti-racism critical analysis.

Passage of this legislation is vital for the education of students in every school district in our state. We must equip all our existing educators and recruit more educators with expertise to teach an accurate US history. This history must be a part of the standard history curriculum and not relegated to being an elective.

The failure to teach this history leads to incomplete and misleading narratives about the African-American community and other communities who do not trace their roots to Europe. This does a disservice to all students. This does not prepare them for critical thought, college success and civic engagement in a multi-cultural, multi-racial community. 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. We can and must do better for our students. It is time that CT joins the 13 other states that have already made steps forward in this regard.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is the largest, predominantly African American public service Sorority with over 250,000 members in over 950 chapters throughout the US and abroad. Founded on January 13, 1913 on the campus of Howard University, the Sorority enjoys a 106-year history of sisterhood, service and scholarship. The Sorority offers public service according to its Five-Point Programmatic Thrust focused on economic development, educational development, international awareness and involvement, physical and mental health and political awareness and involvement. The New Haven Alumnae Chapter consists of over 120 women serving the Greater New Haven area. Our members are community leaders who excel in the fields of education, law, social services and business.

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,

Karimah Mickens Webber

New Haven Alumnae Chapter - President