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**Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents**  
**HB 7083 - An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies in the Public**  
**School Curriculum**  
**HB 7082 – An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African-American Studies in the Public School**  
**Curriculum**  
**March 5, 2019**

My name is Dr. Madeline Negrón. I am the President of the Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (CALAS). Our association is a non-profit organization committed to achieve Latino educator/student advancement and supports. CALAS is one of seventeen state affiliates of the national organization ALAS, the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents. The mission of CALAS is to foster quality and equitable public education for Latino Connecticut students as it seeks to inspire, cultivate, develop and support Hispanic/Latino educational leaders and talent. Our membership is representative of 24 districts (Achievement First, Amity Region 5, Bridgeport, CREC, CTHSS, East Hartford, Fairfield, Greenwich, Hamden, Hartford, LEARN, Manchester, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Oxford, Plainville, Region 12, Waterbury, Windham, Windsor). Among the members there are superintendents, assistant superintendents, cabinet level administrators, principals, assistant principals, deans of students, directors, supervisors, counselors, social workers, department heads, and teachers.

**CALAS SUPPORTS HB 7083 - An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Puerto Rican and Latino**  
**Studies in the Public School Curriculum AND**  
**HB 7082 – An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African-American Studies in the Public School**  
**Curriculum**

The Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents strongly supports the inclusion of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies as well as African-American Studies into public school curricula.

Much has been written about student success in school when Student-Centered Learning approaches are employed. In this pursuit to make CT schools more student-centered, most of the attention has been focused on teaching pedagogy, or the efforts teachers make to engage students in the content. We firmly believe that the content of what the students are learning is as important a lever for engaging students as the manner in which it is taught.



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**HB 7083**

**HB 7082**

The inclusion of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies in the Public School Curricula is not only necessary, it is long overdue. With Puerto Ricans being the largest Latino subgroup, and increasing populations of other Latino subgroups in our schools, not having their history as part of the core curriculum represents an omission of how their contribution helped shape our country. Further, it tacitly promotes the ignorance about the Latino culture that often fuels prejudice and stereotypes. Curriculum often serves as a window into other cultures. As a window, Curriculum on Puerto Rican and Latino cultures exposes non-Latinos to a rich diaspora that has heavily influenced the popular American mainstream culture. It would also serve as a window to the challenges that many Latinos have faced in the recent history. Furthermore, a Curriculum on Puerto Rican and Latino Studies would also serve as a mirror to those who look to their core curriculum as an avenue to learn about themselves. If Latino students do not see themselves as an important part of the history of the United States, they are less likely to identify themselves as contributors to the success of this country. They are more likely to have a diminished view of themselves and their heritage.

CALAS supports HB 7082, the inclusion of African American Studies for the same reasons outlined above for its supports of HB 7083. If all students do not see the contributions of African-Americans as part of their core curriculum, we are neglecting our responsibilities as educators.

Throughout the nation, disparities in achievement and many other life indicators have existed between Latinos and non-Latinos. In CT, the disparities between Latinos, African-Americans and non-Latinos are slowly improving, but still remain alarming. To accelerate the equitable outcomes for all learners, we must be purposeful, deliberate, and unapologetic about the strategies we employ. In 2019, when students of Latino and African American backgrounds make up the majority of students in some districts, incorporating Puerto Rican and Latino & African-American Studies seems long overdue. CALAS feels that having to legislate this is not the best approach because it should be a sentiment shared across districts without the need for it to be mandated. However, due to the need to better engage Latino and African American students, and the importance of utilizing curricula as a primary tool, our achievement data tells us we cannot wait for everyone to agree to this good idea. For this to be done effectively, it must be interwoven naturally into the core curriculum, and not only as a stand-alone elective topic for those interested. All students benefit when CT's Core Curriculum educates learners on the contributions of all those who make up the population of our wonderfully diverse State.

Thank you for considering my testimony.