

Support For HB 7082: An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African-American Studies in the Public School Curriculum

Distinguished Members of the Education Committee,

I'm writing to offer my full support for HB 7082. Its necessity cannot be overstated.

I'm not submitting my testimony because I'm an expert on African-American studies and can speak with authority on all that's missing from our curriculum. It's because the lack of African-American studies is one more way that we perpetuate systemic racism in our communities.

Systemic racism is not going to fix itself. We must be relentlessly proactive about addressing it. Ed Build reports that public school districts that are primarily white receive \$23 **billion** more in funding than districts that are primarily of color.

Pew Research data shows that African-Americans have worse health outcomes than white Americans in every category examined: diabetes, maternal health, cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, and stroke. One study showed that African-American men live an average of 15 years fewer than white men, and African-American women live 9 years fewer.

The damage on racial economic equality is a double-whammy. There has always been an income gap, with African-Americans earning about 15% of what white Americans earn (there are multiple data points and factors, this is an aggregate number). But, the economic inequality gap has hit African-American families harder than white families. While income inequality has been a growing problem in the United States, it has disproportionately affected African-American families because they are overrepresented in the lower income segment.

How do all of these issues relate back to the inclusion of African-American studies in our curriculum? At the core of the systemic racism in our society lies the foundation on which our country was built. Until we are honest about that foundation, and until we truly celebrate African Studies in the same way we have incorporated European figures into our stories, we will continue to raise generations of Americans that don't embrace equality in every area of our lives. The lack of accurate and equal representation of African-American studies in our curriculum sets the stage for our young people to continue (knowingly or not) to perpetuate the systems that lead to all of the inequalities outlined above.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Laura Orban
95 Stony Hill Road
Brookfield CT 06804