

Dear Sen. McCrory, Sen. Sanchez, Ranking Members, Vice-Chairs, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

My name is Alyssa Siegel-Miles. I am a resident of Ledyard.

I am testifying in support of House Bill 7082 "An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African-American Studies in the Public School Curriculum."

As the mother of a young white and Jewish child in public school, it is very important to me that my son learn about the remarkable contributions of African-Americans throughout American history. I want my son to learn about, and from, a wide array of perspectives. I want him to not only learn about African-American history solely through a lens of slavery, although that is important, but also about the many positive contributions that African-Americans have made throughout our country's history. We must teach our children to view all people as whole humans. Children should gain both an appreciation for African Americans currently living in the United States and the challenges they have faced for centuries.

Racism is still very much a reality and persistent fact of life in America. It is not possible to live in America without seeing incidents of racism every day. When children learn these lessons at school, they often go home and share what they learn with their parents, expanding the benefit of the education to the whole family. "Learning about black history is good for *all* students, not just African American students. It helps end racism; it helps students and parents; it gives a full and honest view of African Americans and it helps fight xenophobic views." – Janeane Davis

When students are exposed to a variety of perspectives, it teaches critical thinking skills, such as perspective-taking, abstraction and evidence-based argumentation, which are positively linked to school and academic performance.

Ideally, incorporating African-American studies into public school curriculum can help white students to be critical allies in the struggle for equality for all people.

Thank you,  
Alyssa Siegel-Miles  
Ledyard, CT