

Testimony in Support of HB 7082
An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African-American Studies
in the Public School Curriculum
Updating the Definition of Sex Trafficking
Erin Williamson, LCSW, MPA
Education Committee, March 6th, 2019

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

My name is Erin Williamson and I am a licensed social worker from Woodbridge, Connecticut with two children in the public school system. I support HB 7082 with Students for Educational Justice's (SEJ) proposed amendments.

As a white parent raising two white children and as a social worker that works predominantly with children of color, I believe that it is critical that all children learn about African American studies. The truth is that African American history is American history. Our current racial relations are greatly impacted by our country's history of slavery and racism. In order to provide our children with a vision that change is possible and that race relations can be further improved, we must acknowledge our past. We must also teach children about and celebrate the wonderful contributions Black people and other people of color have made to our country and our world. Children of all races, including children of color should see the experiences of people who look like them throughout their social studies educational curriculum.

As part of our effort to infuse African American studies into the social studies curriculum, we must acknowledge that conversations about race, racism, and slavery often make people feel uncomfortable. Teachers are not immune to this and too often have not received the training necessary to navigate these conversations in age appropriate manners. Therefore, as part of HB 7082 it is critical that social studies teachers and administrators receive the racial bias training that can facilitate this important professional development.

As a social worker who works with children of color, I want the youth I work with to see themselves not only in our nation's history but also in our nation's future. As a parent of two white children, I want my children to learn what it means to be white, to have white privilege, and to be an ally.

I hope that the Committee will see the importance of include African American studies in the social studies component of the public school curriculum and support HB 7082 with SEJ's amendments.

Sincerely,
Erin Williamson, LCSW, MPA