



**State of Connecticut**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
STATE CAPITOL  
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**REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTINE PALM**  
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**COMMITTEES**  
Environment  
Judiciary  
Regulations Review

**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTINE PALM**

**RE:**

**HB 7082: AAC the Inclusion of African American Studies in the Public School Curriculum**

**HB 7083: AAC the Inclusion of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies in the Public School Curriculum**

**SB 957: AAC the Inclusion of Computer Science Instruction in the Public School Curriculum, Programs of Teacher Preparation, and In-Service Training Programs for Teachers**

**Submitted: March 5, 2019**

To: Co-Chairs Sen. McCrory and Rep. Sanchez; Vice Chairs Rep. Barry and Sen. Abrams; Ranking Members Sen. Berthel and Rep. McCarty; and all the Distinguished Members of the Education Committee:

I am here to testify in favor of all three of these bills in principal, with one simple, but critical, modification in the language: I urge you to change one word in lines 20 and 21 in all three bills thus:

“...mathematics; physical education; science, which SHALL include the climate change curriculum described in subsection (d) of this section...”

By changing the existing “may” to “shall,” Connecticut will become the first state in the nation to require the teaching of climate change in public schools. In a time when no fewer than

As it now stands, we are one of 19 states that adopted the Next Generation Science Standards. The Standards are an excellent series of recommendations and methodological reforms aimed at making science more accessible to young learners. But they are not mandated into law and individual school districts are free to implement them as they see fit (or not). By requiring the teaching of science to include climate change, we would be giving this critical subject the weight of state statute.

By mandating such teaching, using the Next Generation Science Standards as a guide, but beginning in elementary school (rather than the NGSS standard of middle school) and modifying

the content each year as is age appropriate, we will be arming our young people with knowledge that is essential to their very survival.

The teaching of cultural studies, including the histories of racism, oppression, economic hardship, as well as the many accomplishments and contributions of African Americans and Latinos, is terribly important. Computer science, too, is necessary for our young people. But if their world continues to be despoiled, defiled and rendered uninhabitable, no amount of cultural awareness or computer literacy will be worth a damn to them.

Climate change is devastating our world and wreaking havoc with the future of our young people. More than 98 percent of peer-reviewed climate scientists agree we are on the brink of irreparable harm if we do not immediately attend to the man-made causes of climate change and the chaos it produces.

Other states are considering this legislation, but none so far has enacted it. If we made the teaching of climate change mandatory, giving it the gravitas of state statute, Connecticut would be a leader in the nation.