Chairman McCrory, Chairman Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Tiffany Moyer-Washington and I have been teaching for 15 years. I am an English teacher at Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy in Hartford. I am also a member of Educators for Excellence -- Connecticut. I am proud to submit testimony in favor of House Bills 7082, An Act Concerning the Inclusion of African American Studies in the Public School Curriculum 7083 An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies in the Public School Curriculum.

While teaching is my profession, my testimony today comes from my other full-time job as a mother of four. Ranging from 5 to 15 years old, you would think motherhood would be my area of expertise, but I have found there is no expert parent - only parents just trying their best. So here, I speak as a parent, trying to do my best for my children and yours.

My oldest son, Jeremiah, entered an essay contest recently that answered the question “What would he do if he were mayor of Hartford?” Among his plans were to create jobs for the homeless, and to improve housing opportunities, but his number one priority was to increase the diversity of books provided in public libraries - particularly focusing on black and brown authors and characters. In his essay he said it was important for "kids to see themselves" in what they read and for those who are not part of those racial identities to "experience someone different to help them build empathy and understanding." Out of the mouths of babes, right?

This bill is the right thing to do - not just for our students of color, but for all of our students. To create literate, compassionate citizens, we need to diversify what our students are being taught and House Bills 7083 and 7082 would hold schools accountable for culturally responsive teaching and provide a voice for communities we have oppressed and silenced for far too long.

In closing, I encourage you to approve this bill and do what is best for all students.

Thank you
Hartford Resident
Tiffany Moyer-Washington