

March 25, 2021

Re: House Bill No. 6662

Dear Appropriations Committee:

Please accept this written testimony in support of **House Bill No. 6662, An Act Declaring Racism As a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.**

Racism must be prioritized because it is an institutional issue, deeply embedded within almost all systems of government, perpetuated by industries and public services including health care, housing, law enforcement, the prison system, education, and more.

By declaring racism a public health issue, you will signal to Connecticut residents that the General Assembly is serious about tackling this critical issue. Establishment of the Commission on Racial Equity will help to move tangible actions forward.

Our communities of color desperately need your leadership on this because, without meaningful change, they will continue to die as a result. I wish this were hyperbole, but it is not. Along with the murders of Black people at the hands of law enforcement, we know that Black women die in pregnancy and childbirth at a rate almost 4 times that of White women. In addition, Black babies are 4x more likely to die within their first year of life than white babies. This is simply unacceptable.

I respectfully urge you to move this bill forward so that Connecticut can begin meaningful steps to address and dismantle racism.

Sincerely,

Catherine Bailey
West Hartford