

Senator Catherine A. Osten (Co-Chair), Representative Toni E. Walker (Co-Chair) and Members of the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Samantha Bernstein-Naples and I live in Hartford, Connecticut. I stand in support of H.B. No. 6662: An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.

I have lived in Hartford all my life and have seen firsthand the devastating impact that racism has on members of my community. It is essential that racism be declared a public health crisis, as the current state of our country has made it clear time and time again that racism is one of the most prominent issues facing America to this day. This bill is an important step in furthering efforts for racial equity. Racism has negative physical and mental health implications including hypertension, preterm birth, shortened life span, depression, anxiety, and poor quality of life. To stand by and allow racism to continue to ravage our community would be to send the message that what is happening right now, from police brutality to more limited housing opportunities for minorities, is ok when we know it to be disgraceful.

H.B. 6662 is an opportunity for our state to lead the pursuit for racial justice with action. I stand with the Connecticut Campaign to Address Racism as a Public Health Crisis and ask that this bill be amended to include a review and reform of the legislative process to improve public accessibility and set in place mechanisms to determine the impact of proposed legislation on race.

In closing, I urge you to support H.B. No. 6662 An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.