



Testimony Supporting

HB 6659: AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONNECTICUT BABY BONDS TRUST, AND RAISED BILL 6662: AN ACT DECLARING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND ESTABLISHING THE COMMISSION ON RACIAL EQUITY IN PUBLIC HEALTH
03/26/2021

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to appear today. My name is Pastor William McCullough. I am Senior Pastor of Russell Temple CME Church in Bridgeport, the President of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Greater Bridgeport and Vicinity, and the Founder of FaithActs for Education.

I'm here today to represent 80 congregations and the countless children and families across our state who make up the FaithActs family. We support H.B. 6659 An Act Concerning the Establishment of the Connecticut Baby Bonds Trust.

I am here to also support Raised Bill Number 6662 -- An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.

We at FaithActs are people of faith building power to get children the education they deserve.

We organize and advocate because we know that faith without works is dead.

And we work like we do because we know demons that stand between our children and a bright, prosperous future.

Racism and Poverty are the two most powerful demons our children face today -- and they go hand in hand.

They extend their nasty claws into every aspect of a child's life. From the home they live in to the food they eat, the safety of their neighborhoods, and the opportunities they receive to reach their God-given potential.

They drag their craggy fingernails across the blackboards of substandard public schools because the powers that be in this state have decided they aren't worth funding.



We know Poverty is all too willing to point the way to poor health, addiction, violence and despair. And we know Racism is there every step of the way -- infecting how our children are seen and how they are treated -- by other people and yes, even their state government.

We know Poverty steals hope from a child, and hopelessness is a dangerous state of mind.

And we know all too well that Racism kills. Sometimes in an instant, sometimes in nine seconds, sometimes over a lifetime. But we know the mortality rate from Racism is 100 percent.

That is a public health crisis.

I heard it said once that a poor Black or Brown child in our cities will know the sound of gunfire before they know the sound of an orchestra.

That is the sin of Racism and the curse of Poverty.

Yes it is possible to escape, but it is so hard. It is so hard because so many other painful and ingrained difficulties of life ride in its wake.

H.B. 6659 can be a tool to help children make that escape. Raised Bill 6662 can set us on a long-term path to righteousness.

Connecticut needs to quickly reassess its priorities. Already, generations have suffered. We need equity now.

Funds set aside and invested by the government can provide thousands of dollars for Connecticut's children to invest when they're old enough -- not in stocks and bonds but in themselves and in their future. In higher education, property or their own start-up business.

And in their home state.

Baby Bonds aren't a magical solution to poverty. But it will go a long way to telling our state's poor children that our government believes in them and will invest in them so they can reach their God-given potential.

Declaring Racism a public health crisis and creating a Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health won't destroy the demon that Racism is and end the tragedies it encourages.



But together -- and in tandem with several other measures before the Legislature this year – they will put our state on a better path.

Please support HB 6659 An Act Concerning the Establishment of the Connecticut Baby Bonds Trust., and Raised Bill Number 6662 -- An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.

Sincerely,
Thank you.

Pastor William McCullough
228 Ridgefield Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06610

Russell Temple CME
555 Connecticut Ave
Bridgeport, CT 06607

FaithActs for Education
857 Post Road, Suite 310
Fairfield, CT 06824