

H.B. No. 6662, An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racism Equity in Public Health.

Appropriations Committee
Ann Pratt, Director of Organizing
CT Citizen Action Group
March 26, 2021

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Ann Pratt, and I am Director of Organizing at CT Citizen Action Group, a statewide membership organization committed to altering the relations of power to bring about a more just and equitable society.

We strongly support H.B. No. 6662: An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.

Our communities, state, country and globe face overlapping crises - the current pandemic, massive levels of unemployment, food insecurity, homelessness and inexcusable lack of access to healthcare. These current crises have laid bare the ever-present realities of deeply entrenched systemic racism that eats away at the very fabric of our communities and institutions. The current crisis requires of us bold and urgent actions.

H.B.6662 takes important steps to addressing the urgent crisis of systemic racism by:

1. Declaring racism a public health crisis
2. Creates a Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health that brings together cross-sector partners in the executive branch and create a strategic plan to eliminate health disparities
3. Requires the Commission to engage with community members
4. Requires studies and recommendations on health care workforce diversity, environment health programs, and cultural humility trainings for students in health programs
5. Requires the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health to report to the Connecticut General Assembly on the status of its work, progress towards its goals, and policy recommendations

We respectfully recommend the bill include staffing to create racial impact assessments on proposed policies. This will enable the Connecticut General Assembly to evaluate the potential for policies to promote equity or have a disparate impact.

The pandemic did not create the deep racial inequities in our state, but it can be an opportunity to address them.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify 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.**

Sincerely,
Ann Pratt, CCAG