

Written Testimony of Anne Stanback
Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA)
In support of:

H.B. 6662: An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Anne Stanback, and I live in the town of Avon. I am also a member of Immanuel Congregational Church/UCC in Hartford. Immanuel Church is one of the founding members of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA). GHIAA launched in the fall of 2019 and is comprised of nearly 40 dues-paying institutions, including Jewish, Christian and Muslim congregations and Catholic and neighborhood organizations. I submit this testimony in support of H.B. 6662 as a member of GHIAA.

Many individuals and organizations will testify in support of H.B. 6662 from a variety of perspectives. I testify as a person of faith, a person who believes that systemic and structural racism—which play a large role in determining the conditions in people’s lives from birth to death—distort the value of human dignity at the core of every faith tradition.

I also testify as someone who has spent her entire career working within the nonprofit sphere, first as a staff person at INFOLINE of South Central CT in New Haven (now 211 CT), and later with women and the LGBTQ community. Whether the constituency was individuals seeking housing, food, child day care or health care who called INFOLINE; the women we served when I was the Executive Director of the Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF); or the individuals from the LGBTQ community we advocated for when I was the Executive Director of Love Makes a Family; people of color commonly faced discrimination and systemic barriers not faced by white people.

In my work, I saw first-hand that racism affects people’s access to quality housing, education, food, transportation, political power, and other social determinants of health. Racism also has negative mental and physical health consequences such as, depression, anxiety, hypertension, preterm birth, shortened life span and poor quality of life. Understanding and addressing racism from this public health perspective is crucial to eliminating racial and ethnic inequities, and improving opportunity and well-being across communities.

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. 6662, *An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.*