



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

Appropriations Committee
Jenna Van Donselaar
March 26, 2021

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

My name is Jenna Van Donselaar and I live in Willimantic, 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.

Declaring racism a public health crisis is a crucial starting point for acknowledging the role racism plays in our state and working towards correcting the harm racism has caused to our communities. Declaring racism a public health crisis will allow appropriate resources to be directed toward addressing said crisis. Our state is diverse, and yet it is plagued by income inequality, racism, and systemic oppression that keeps all communities from thriving as they should. The ongoing legacy of racism in our state is a tragedy that must be addressed immediately and boldly.

Specifically, I **strongly support** H.B.6662, An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.

I **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 events and pandemic of 2020 revealed many of the inequities in our country that so many people were already living with on the day to day. Now we have an opportunity to address these inequalities, starting with this bill which will move our state closer to a vision of health equity.

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,
Jenna Van Donselaar