

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

Appropriations Committee

Katherine Whitney

March 26, 2021

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

My name is Katherine Whitney and I live in West 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 am a Master's of social work student at the University of Connecticut, and someday I hope to help research and write policies like this one. I believe that by declaring racism a public health crisis and establishing a commission which will actively respond to this crisis, we lay the groundwork for an equitable, truly democratic society in which no one is excluded from full participation because of their race or health status. As Connecticut begins to recover from a global pandemic, I believe that this body has a moral obligation to address the long-standing effects of racism in the public health system, as well as the immediate effects of the environmental racism that creates health problems which disproportionately affect people of color. The public health emergency of the pandemic did not create the deep racial inequities in our state, but it can be an opportunity to address them. This bill takes steps to dismantle components of systemic racism and move Connecticut closer to 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,

Katherine Whitney