

March 17, 2021

Senator Daugherty Abrams (Co-Chair), Representative Steinberg (Co-Chair) and Members of the Public Health Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Veronica T. DeLandro and I live in *New Britain, Connecticut*. I stand in support of S.B. 1 An Act Equalizing Comprehensive Access to Mental, Behavioral and Physical Health Care in Response to the Pandemic. More specifically **Section 6 and 7** to declare racism as a public health crisis in the state and establish a commission to study the impact of institutional racism on public health.

On June 24<sup>th</sup> I called into New Britain's Common Council meeting and shared the following

***“Declaring racism, a public health crisis or emergency offers a clear path to intentionally acknowledging and addressing disparities and inequities in this city. The emotional, psychological, mental and physical stress of being Black and brown in America has taken a toll and has a direct correlation to one's health.”***

***“Racism is embedded in every facet of our lives. From education, to health, to housing, to public safety, to hiring practices, all the way down to how we vote.”***

***“Adopting this resolution can and should lead to the examination of existing policies in this city so we can dismantle or course-correct problematic systems and structures. We need to make sure all elected and appointed officials in this City are embedding racial equity in every decision they make.”***

During the council meeting, a resolution was passed 15-0 declaring racism a public health in the city of New Britain. That was the first step, it's now time to **take action**.

S.B. 1 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 the following recommendations also be considered in this bill.

- The name of the commission be changed to be reflective of its work i.e., “The Connecticut Commission on Racial Impact and Reconciliation.”
- A commitment to 2 members of the proposed commission be persons of color, residing in a major city of Connecticut with an annual income of less than \$65,000 creating a total of 12 commission members.
- Expand racial/ethnic data collection to expose disparities in communities.
- A review and reform of the legislative process to improve public accessibility and set in place mechanism to determine the impact of proposed legislation on race.
- Training for OLR and OFA to create racial and ethnic impact assessments.
- Establishing a clear racial equity approach in policies set forth by the executive branch.

In closing, I urge you to support S.B. 1 An Act Equalizing Comprehensive Access to Mental, Behavioral and Physical Health Care in Response to the Pandemic.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Veronica T. DeLandro  
New Britain, CT