

[March 13, 2021](#)

RE: SB-1 and SB-55 Racism as a Public Health Crisis
Public Hearing Dated [March 17, 2021 at 9am](#)

Dear Public Health Committee,

I hope this reaches you in great spirits. I am submitting this formal written testimony as I adamantly support the SB-1 & SB-55 Racism as a Public Health Crisis
S.B. No. 1 (COMM) AN ACT EQUALIZING COMPREHENSIVE ACCESS TO MENTAL, BEHAVIORAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH CARE IN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC.

My Personal Experiences

I'm extremely perturbed by blatant implicit racism and biases that I witness on a daily basis in medical and mental health fields in Connecticut. It's not even remotely subtle. I work in all the communities as a Family /Community Advocate, specifically for children and young adults that are disabled community. It's extremely heartbreaking for me as I sit on many boards, attend many Equity/ Equality community meetings, symposiums, and conferences. With each encounter I leave with the same disappointment at the lack of cultural competency amongst the citizens, healthcare providers, service providers and legislators.

I say this to emphasize that Racism is Indeed a Public Health Emergency. My daughter and I have fought vigorously and tirelessly since early 2017 to obtain appropriate medical and mental health services for my two minor grandchildren. Both needed extensive and comprehensive treatment due to a kidnapping, physical abuse and possible sexual assault, Instead of putting the children first, we were constantly spoken to in condescending / belittling manner treating us like 3rd Class Citizens. We were never taken seriously on our reports of risk of injuries to others or themselves. The older minor children while in an acute crisis was kicked out of an acute facility in the middle of the night in their parking lot. This caused said minor child to be displaced with this abrupt discharged from an acute therapeutic residential facility with no treatment plan, medicine or services in place. When my daughter and I questioned if this is a legal and ethical practice, we were immediately threatened by having the police called to remove us from the premises. All over an miscommunication of a Peanut Allergy

Our professional background and credentials were investigated as employees in the medical / legal fields. This information was then falsely used against us to diagnose and code both minors charts as Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy, Each specialist medical provider's, for both children, medical records were scrubbed to investigate possible misdiagnosis of chronic illnesses, some since birth. We've had numerous DCF complaints filed against my daughter. All Unfounded Cases Closed. However, no apologies. When requesting Voluntary DCF Service on three occasions, was told to just leave Connecticut, as no other services could be provided. Multiple medications prescribed for one child, however the Psychiatrist refused to participate in any PPT meeting and give a definitive diagnosis(es) as well. While inpatient in an acute residential facility, the other child was a psychotropic medicine regime. Upon discharge, it was discovered that said child was on absolutely no medication regime. It was stated that the wanted see out reaction. Their point was to prove to us that said child could be stabilized without medications, Their theory was easily debunked as there were at least 15 subsequent hospitalizations. As a result of ignoring our pleas, the said child murdered her younger brother. My grandson died [August 7, 2020](#). These racist practices are widespread in Connecticut and definitely not isolated situations. Why? How is this even possible? I get calls every day to assist minority parents with some of the same issues with children. How is it that one can work in the communities to fight to protect the right for all children, however can't protect their own children due to implicit racism/ biases?

The White population is approximately 84%, Hispanic is approximately 16%, while the Black/African American is 10%. The Black/ African American communities comprise of Black American Descendants of Chattel Slavery, those from Carribean Islands, Nigeria, Ghana, Somalia, and Haiti. There is absolutely no disaggregated data that reflects specific ethnicities. However, each of these groups of people with specific lineage are consistently discriminated against simply because of the color of their Black skin. This all stems from 400 years of institutionalized systematic

oppression and racism directly attributed to the horrific history of Black Chattel Slavery ([1619-1784](#)). The Act of Gradual Abolition. If born after [March 1, 1784](#) your freed at the age 25,

I'd like to expound upon the facts, my personal experiences and opinions. In 2009 14 Legislatures, in the House & Judiciary Committee, unanimously decided to pass House Joint Resolution 1.

**January Session,
2009**

**House Joint
Resolution No. 1**

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through REP. SPALLONE of the 36th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the joint resolution ought to be adopted. [April 15, 2009](#)

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND REGRET OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE HISTORY OF WRONGS INFLICTED UPON BLACK CITIZENS BY MEANS OF SLAVERY, EXPLOITATION AND LEGALIZED RACIAL SEGREGATION, AND CALLING ON ALL CITIZENS TO TAKE PART IN ACTS OF RACIAL RECONCILIATION.

SUMMARY:

Through this resolution, the General Assembly:

- 1. issues an apology for slavery practiced in Connecticut and the official acts that sanctioned and perpetuated it;***
- 2. vows to work to eliminate the residual structures of racism existing in the state;***
- 3. urges educational, religious, civic, and business entities to acknowledge and learn from Connecticut's past, including as a leading state in the abolition efforts, to promote racial equality and reconciliation; and***
- 4. calls on residents to recommit their state, communities, and themselves to work daily to promote equality, as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence; treat all people with respect; and eliminate racial prejudices and injustices.***

The resolution provides a brief history of how Connecticut first supported slavery and then worked toward its abolition. It acknowledges that several nations, states, and corporations have issued apologies for their roles in promoting slavery.

Absolutely none of the above referenced vows or requests have been adhered to. However, Connecticut continues to be complicit in the eerily reminiscent practices of the Jim Crow Era. We have to do much better and stop sweeping these issues underneath the rug.

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the historical discriminative practices and systematic racism / oppression must be addressed on all levels for Black/ African American's rights to Liberty, the Pursuit Equal Health and Happiness. Creating a Commission to Study the Inequities/ Inequalities of Black American Descendants of Chattel Slavery will allow the viewing, through another lens, why and how the consistent disparities in the Black communities exist. Without doing so, this above referenced apology means absolutely nothing. It's just been an empty promise and pacification for the past 10 years. We cannot afford another loss of life of a child/ children in the undeserved Black communities due Racism in Public Health. I'm wearing my heart on sleeve as I beg of you all to please do not ignore my grandson's death. Please create this commission if for no reason so that is his name and death aren't in vain

I thank you for taking the time to hear me today, Your anticipated assistance in working toward remedies and resolutions in the Black communities will be greatly appreciated.

Have a Wonderful Day!
Antonia Edwards
SolIDarit