

Dear Chairs Daugherty Abrams and Steinberg, Vice Chairs Anwar, Kushner, and Gilchrest Dregaw, Ranking Members Hwang, Somers, and Petit, and members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Timothy Gabriele. I am a resident of North Haven, CT and I am testifying to communicate my endorsement of SB-1, An Act Equalizing Comprehensive Access to Mental, Behavioral, and Physical Health Care in Response to the Pandemic.

Systemic racism has a significant impact on public health, not just in Connecticut, but certainly Connecticut is not excluded from this. [COVID-19](#) was only one spot where this was clearly laid bare, with black and Latino populations more likely to be employed in “essential” work positions and face greater risk of exposure. Black mothers face higher rates of maternal and infant death. Racist policy in zoning and housing leads to adverse health outcomes, higher rates of cancer, asthma, and lung disease. Institutionally racist hiring policy precludes blacks and people of color from earning enough to pay to manage these adverse health outcomes or shuts them out of healthcare altogether. Being more susceptible to poverty also puts one at greater risk for violence, not only from criminal elements but also from law enforcement.

20 municipalities in Connecticut have taken steps to declare Racism a public health crisis and it’s time for the State of Connecticut to do the same. Upon doing so we can study the best way to address the crisis at an institutional and structural level and hold ourselves accountable for the ways in which we allow these problems to persist. This data should be assembled in a methodically sound and transparent way and be made available to legislators when adopting future policies to safeguard against exacerbating existing disparities and remediating them when possible. This review process should not only involve legislators, social scientists, and academics, but community members that display the diversity of the groups being affected.

I hope the committee and Connecticut lawmakers agree that SB-1 be considered for a vote. I strongly endorse its passage. I thank the committee for their time.

Sincerely,  
Timothy Gabriele  
North Haven, CT