

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 Connecticut. It's not even remotely subtle. The explicit covert racism that exists is a public health crisis. The redlining and restrictive covenants caused the Black American Descendants of Chattel Slavery to be forced into the worst geographical locations for living conditions as well as forcing them into areas that suffer the most environmental damage and pollution which stand to be the same communities that black migrants integrate into. The Jim Crow era and the era of the Klan produced fear and terror that not only kept us out of the political arena, but it also instilled a distinct separation of not only social circumstances but also resources which include medical and housing. The deprivation of generational wealth, the massive incarceration rates in the state's history, the alarmingly high income disparities between whites and blacks in this state, the locking out of black veterans after WW2, the trauma Black American Descendants of Chattel Slavery have had to retain over the generations, the feigned ignorance of our white counterparts, and the lack of Reparations has caused the black community to suffer not only directly through violence and exclusion but also via diseases and cancers produced by the ever-enduring stress caused by racism. Racism almost cost me my college education. Racism took my sister's life through environmental hazards. Racism took my father through diabetes and high blood pressure. Racism took my mother through cancer in her stomach as a result of biased medical treatment. Racism has driven me to immense depression and constant self-hate due to the detriments to my psyche.

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.

<i>January Session, 2009</i>	House Joint Resolution No. 1
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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 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 of the historical discriminative practices and systematic racism / oppression must be addressed on all levels for Black/ African American's rights to Liberty and the Pursuit Equal Happiness. Studying the Inequities/ Inequalities of Black American Descendants of Chattel Slavery can viewed through another lens as why the consistently 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 due in the underserved communities. I'm wearing my heart on sleeve and begging you all to please not ignored my grandson's death nor let it be in vain,

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

Have a Wonderful Day!
James Keitt
SolIDarity