

To whom it may concern:

My name is Sreeja Kodali and I'm a Yale medical student living in New Haven, Connecticut.

I am writing in strong support of S.B. No. 1 AN ACT EQUALIZING COMPREHENSIVE ACCESS TO MENTAL, BEHAVIORAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH CARE IN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC, an act declaring racism as a public health crisis in the great state of Connecticut.

By enabling the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, S.B. No. 1 will allow us to better understand systemic racism's pervasive damage on the health of Connecticut people and move us toward policies that remove barriers to healthy living. It is well documented that the chronic stress due to a lifetime of racial discrimination causes negative health outcomes.

For example, highly educated Black women are 1.6 times more likely to die due to pregnancy-related complications than white women without high school diplomas. It's not due to some genetic cause or discrepancies in prenatal care. Research has found that the root cause is an environmental/social factor that specifically targets all Black women in the US: racism.

I remember learning this sickening truth. It was a fall evening in a classroom of crowded red chairs, and I was sitting among my classmates many of whom are black women. Even though we all take the same classes, care for the same patients, and wear the same white coats, my Black female peers will not be protected by their MDs. Their brilliance, compassion, and talent cannot help them. No matter how high they rise, they cannot escape the deadly impacts of racism unless our community acts dramatically.

Many towns have passed resolutions that declare racism is a public health crisis. As a future physician, I think it's imperative that this bill passes. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sreeja Kodali (she/her)
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Yale School of Medicine 2023