



**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1: An Act Equalizing Comprehensive Access to Mental, Behavioral and Physical Health Care in Response to the Pandemic
Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate
Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ
March 16, 2021,**

Senator Daugherty Abrams, Representative Steinberg, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee,

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ (SNEUCC) and I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 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.

I am writing on behalf of the 614 congregations and more than 120,000 people in our state's churches. In fact, the United Church of Christ (UCC) is the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut. Nationally, the UCC has more than 5,700 congregations with nearly 1 million members. The Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ is committed to eradicate racism in our personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural realms.

Senate Bill 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 ie. "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 a 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.

Thank you for your work and the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of Senate Bill 1.

Blessings,
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Southern New England Conference

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