

Testimony of Councilwoman Danielle Wong

Appropriations Committee

RE: Testimony in Support of H.B. 6659 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONNECTICUT BABY BONDS TRUST

March 26, 2021

Namaste. Senator Osten, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Danielle Wong and I am a member of the Bloomfield Town Council. I am submitting testimony in support of House Bill 6659, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONNECTICUT BABY BONDS TRUST. This bill creates endowments for children born into poverty.

This bill is an innovative approach that addresses Connecticut's racial wealth gap by allocating \$5,000 for each child born onto Husky. As it requires recipients to spend in state, it also stimulates the economy while encouraging resident retention.

Racial wealth inequity clearly exists in my town, Bloomfield. 8,613 households are assigned as part of the ALICE population (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed -- a research initiative headed by United Way). This population represents our working families, our working poor and our black and brown families that are suffering to afford basic needs. These families cannot afford to put food on the table each day, they cannot afford to bury their loved ones, and they cannot even afford decent WIFI so their children can attend school remotely.

Bloomfield residents, mostly black and brown homeowners, have been robbed of equity and generational wealth because of historic racial and discriminatory housing practices like red-lining and blockbusting. Right next door in West Hartford, a house (same size same quality) would sell for up to \$100k more. Our schools are predominately black, yet our population is ~40% white. These conditions are rooted in leftover Jim Crow laws, and persistent labor market discrimination and segregation, which means less access to stable jobs, good wages, and retirement benefits at work.

Connecticut is in need of real solutions that thoughtfully and specifically address the massive generational deficits in the black and brown communities -- like this bill. A pathway to racial equity is through economic justice. Thank you to Treasurer Wooden for raising this bill and doing this very important racial equity work. I support the passage of this bill and I ask each of you to support and ultimately fund this bill as well.

Respectfully submitted, namaste.

Danielle Wong
Councilwoman, Town of Bloomfield
106 Spring Wood Lane
Bloomfield, CT 06002
Dcwong19@gmail.com
dwong@bloomfieldct.org