

H.B. No. 6662, An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establish the Commission on Racism Equity in Public Health.

Appropriations Committee
Christopher Atchley
March 26, 2021

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Christopher Atchley and I live in Hamden, Connecticut. I stand in support of H.B. No. 6662: An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.

Specifically, I strongly support H.B.6662, because systemic racism is a social determinant of health itself, and also produces inequities across all social determinants of health. From disproportionately high Black maternity and infant death rates; inequities in cancer, asthma, heart and lung diseases; and weathering deteriorating mental and physical health; to police brutality; environmental racism; and unequal access to health care: racism is a public health crisis!

I respectfully recommend the bill include staffing to create racial impact assessments on proposed policies. This will enable the Connecticut General Assembly to evaluate the potential for policies to promote equity or have a disparate impact.

The pandemic did not create the deep racial inequities in our state, but it can be an opportunity to address them. This bill takes steps to dismantle components of systemic racism and move Connecticut closer to health equity. We must act now while these inequalities are more prevalent than ever, and bring restorative justice to our communities of color.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. No. 6662, An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.

Sincerely,

Christopher Atchley
Hamden Democratic Town Committeeman
Hamden, CT