



**CITY OF NEW HAVEN
BOARD OF ALDERS
Office of Alderman Darryl J. Brackeen Jr.**

**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

March 26, 2021

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

My name is Alderman Darryl Brackeen Jr and I live in New Haven, Connecticut. I serve on the New Haven Board of Alderman as the chairman of the Health and Human Services chairman and the chairman of the Racism as a Public Health Issue working group. 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. I don't come today with empty words but the working evidence and actions of not just declaring racism as a public health issue, but implementing the state's first major city to issue initial major recommendations that was unanimously adopted and signed by the Mayor of the City of New Haven to take the next steps in our city to address this very issue.

This legislation affirms that black and brown communities are more likely to experience poor health outcomes because of inequities in economic stability, education, physical environment, food, and health care. There was a very inclusive community process having held many public hearings that allowed for many opportunities for community members, subject matter experts, community activists to participate in this process. We also understand that this process will be ever growing, which is why we will implement the city's first Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Affirmative Action Commission to continue to implement the recommendations and transform our government in addressing racism as a public health issue. This report is not exhaustive but meant to be a starting place for ever going conversation, but it is vitally important to take a stance and create plant a flag for action and justice.

The Working Group issued several dozen recommendations. Here are just a few.

- Develop the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Affirmative Action commission and secure funding for it to operate have a staff and transform how government engages on these issues.

- We have asked community partners such as Yale New Haven Hospital and Yale University to expand a community benefit programs to ensure that health improvement funds are strategically flow into Black and Brown communities.

- Support for development of Black and Brown businesses, as well as expanding cash assistance under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

- Reduce food apartheid and insecurity, both of which are related to low-cost and low-nutrient foods such as sugar-sweetened beverages which are disproportionately marketed to Black and Hispanic/Latinx communities causing negative health outcomes like obesity and hypertension).

- Guarantee healthy food for every public-school student, three times a day, 365 days a year, with special attention to providing “gap” meals during times when children are out of school such as vacation and summer breaks.

- Addressing the disparities that exists in trying to increase minority contractors when its time for development and city contracts.
- The Board of Alders should require an external systematic review and accountability plan of department practices and policies for racial bias (hiring demographics, response times to complaints broken down by race, review of complaints of racial bias by civilians against officers). This should also include a review of racial breakdown of law enforcement activities (e.g. stops, arrests, charging – if this review is including prosecutors as part of law enforcement.

I will also attach the comprehensive report for the initial steps to addressing this issue within the City of New Haven.

I **strongly support** H.B.6662, An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.

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,

Alderman Darryl J. Brackeen Jr.

City of New Haven Board of Alderman
Chair, Health and Human Services Committee
Chair, New Haven Racism as a Public Health Issue Working Group