

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
Lisa Carley Fay
March 26, 2021

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

My name is Lisa Fay and I live in Fairfield, 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. I serve as an educational coach in Bridgeport, which supports family childcare educators, many of whom are women of color and who would be directly affected by this declaration and the establishment of a Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health.

Declaring racism as a public health crisis is important to me because I see the crisis in the field of early childhood education. Our national early childcare workforce is made up mostly of women, 40% women of color. In the field of family childcare, 75 percent of African American home-based educators live in households with incomes that are less than the national median. These women are essential supports in their communities, giving quality care to children of working families, and caring for our youngest citizens at the most crucial stage of their development: early childhood.

And yet, due to low wages, very demanding work, and cost of running their businesses, no paid sick leave, and the expense of health insurance, along with the inequities in our health care system that disproportionately negatively affect our educators of color - due to long standing racist policies - our early childhood workforce in CT is in peril. The pandemic has laid bare these inequities between white and people of color.

Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health would affect our community of family childcare educators of color - and all women and men of color and their families who work in the field of early childhood - in its naming and identifying the racism implicit in our public health policies and practices, and its identification of solutions.

Specifically, 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.

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. As the state receives funds through the American Rescue Plan, we have an opportunity to remedy old racist systems that have harmed people of color, especially most vulnerable, our children.

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,
Lisa Carley Fay