



Southern New England Conference

United Church of Christ

Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

*Hartford Office - 125 Sherman Street, Hartford, CT 06105
Framingham Office - 1 Badger Road, Framingham, MA 01702*

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 6662: An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health
Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate
Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ
March 24, 2021,**

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations 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 House Bill 6662: An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Commission on Racial Equity in 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.

House Bill 6662 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 this bill be amended to include a review and reform of the legislative process to improve public accessibility and set in place mechanisms to determine the impact of proposed legislation on race.

Racism has been declared a public health crisis in 6 states, 182 municipalities, entities, and organizations, including 20 municipalities in Connecticut. Here are some reasons why Connecticut should declare racism as a public health crisis:

- Pregnancy related deaths are higher in Black women. The Black maternal mortality rate is currently at a 48.0 rate compared to a 14.8 rate for White maternal mortality.
- Communities of color are less likely to have a primary doctor, lack preventive care and are two times as likely to postpone or go without care.
- Compared to their White peers, Black children and teens are nearly 5.5 times more likely to go to the emergency department because of asthma, while Hispanic children and teens are 4.5 times as likely.
- Black residents are nearly four times as likely as White residents to have diabetes related lower-extremity amputation, and more than twice as likely to die from diabetes.

Thank you for your work and the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of House Bill 6662.

Blessings,
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