

H.B. No. 6662, An Act Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Establish the Commission on Racism Equity in Public Health & H.B. 6659 An Act Concerning The Establishment of the Connecticut Baby Bonds Trust

Appropriations Committee
Kristianna J. Smith
March 26, 2021

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

My name is Kristianna Smith and I live in New Britain, 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 as well as H.B. No 6659 An Act Concerning The Establishment of the Connecticut Baby Bonds Trust.

These two bills work to improve the holistic health of Communities of Color in our state which have been disproportionately harmed by both historic practices as well the impact of the COVID 19 Pandemic.

I'm speaking to you as a Black woman, a mother, and a liberation consultant.

Until now, I believe that the legislative approach to investing in Black and Brown communities has been similar to buying a used car. Spending a largish chunk of change on an effort that has a reasonable chance of depreciating over time. It has kept our cities in a constant state of survival, and moreover, it has directly harmed the lives of constituents of this state who have little structural assistance in improving their circumstances.

These two bills offer the state of Connecticut the opportunity to start investing in its Black and Brown communities similarly to how we invest in our retirement plans. Intentionally and consistently putting effort into structures that can support a continuous growth for Communities of Color and as a result, our entire state.

Rarely in history do people get the chance to see the ramifications of their inactions. COVID 19 has shown us how vulnerable to death Black and Brown communities are. How lack of generational wealth leaves our communities vulnerable to homelessness- even in the midst of the winter in a global pandemic. These are the ramifications of a lack of structural care by the CT legislature and these two bills are steps to immediately address the direct impact White Supremacy and Institutional Racism has on our state.

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 and urge your support for HB 6659 An Act Concerning the Establishment of the Connecticut Baby Bonds Trust.

I respectfully recommend the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health reporting requirements to be staffed to send the report to the Connecticut General Assembly on the status of the commission of activities and progress made and recommendations for policy changes and any changes to the commission's goals.

The pandemic did not create the deep racial inequities in our state, but it can be an opportunity to address them. These bills take steps to dismantle components of systemic racism and move Connecticut closer to health and financial equity. The health of Black and Brown communities should no longer be deferred, if COVID 19 has shown us anything, it is that our community will not be protected by what exists now. Which is why you must create the structures that will help protect us, and our children, immediately.

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 and HB 6659 An Act Concerning the Establishment of the Connecticut Baby Bonds Trust.**

Sincerely,
Kristianna J. Smith