

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

To the Appropriations Committee  
From Corona Zhang  
March 26, 2021

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

My name is Corona Zhang and I live in West Hartford, 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.

During my time at UConn as an undergraduate and public health graduate student, I've studied the effects of racism on the health of CT residents. **There are racial health inequities in all areas**, including maternal health, environmental health, infectious disease, and mental health. There are racial inequities in social determinants of health as well, as Black and Brown residents are more likely to be evicted and become homeless than White residents; more likely to live in neighborhoods of low opportunity; more likely to be food insecure and much more. Recently, I've learned how racist policies and practices like redlining, reverse redlining, housing discrimination, police brutality, the school-to-prison pipeline and medical racism have caused these inequities. And I am overwhelmed and ashamed that my state has let these things happen.

I first moved here with my mom from Massachusetts when I was 10 years old, and as I grew up, I really considered moving out of CT. As a young queer person of color, I wasn't sure if I was comfortable staying here. Learning about the racist history and racial health inequities here hasn't helped. However, **what gives me hope and makes me want to stay** is that there are so many people, BIPOC and white allies, coming together to seriously address racial inequities and to build a better CT. HB No. 6662 will help make that happen! The Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health will formalize the study of how racism impacts health and systematize our interventions. It will provide us guidance and hold us accountable. It will bring diverse sectors together, and really make a change--- change that so many CT residents' lives depend on.

**Lastly, I'd like to respectfully recommend** that the bill include staffing to create racial impact assessments on all proposed policies. This will enable the Connecticut General Assembly to evaluate the potential for policies to promote equity or have a disparate impact.

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.

Best Regards,  
Corona Zhang (they/them)  
West Hartford, CT