

March 13, 2021
RE: SB-1024 Desegregate Connecticut
Public Hearing Dated March 15, 2021 at 10am

Dear Planning & Development Committee,

Please see attached for my written testimony in favor of SB 1024.

Thank you so much for considering it.

[NAME]

[TOWN OF RESIDENCE]

I hope this reaches you in great spirits. I am submitting this formal written testimony as I adamantly support the Racial Desegregation of Connecticut through CT Bill SB-1024 as follows;

H.B. No. 6611 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND OTHER POLICIES REGARDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT.

H.B. No. 6612 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING PROTECTIONS FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES AND THE ZONING ENABLING ACT.

H.B. No. 6613 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESSORY APARTMENTS, MIDDLE HOUSING AND MULTIFAMILY HOUSING.

My Personal Experiences

I'm extremely perturbed by blatant implicit racism and biases that I witness on a daily basis in Connecticut. It's not even remotely subtle. The White population is approximately 84%, Hispanic is approximately 16%, while the Black/African American is 10%.

The Black/ African American communities comprise of Black American Descendants of Chattel Slavery, those from Caribbean Islands, Nigeria, Ghana, Somalia, and Haiti. There is absolutely no disaggregated data that reflects specific ethnicities. However, each of these groups of people with specific lineage are consistently discriminated against simply because of the color of their Black skin. This all stems from 400 years of institutionalized systematic oppression and racism directly attributed to the horrific history of Black Chattel Slavery (1619-1784). The Act of Gradual Abolition. If born after March 1, 1784 you're freed at the age 25,

Those considered to Black / African American have historically been redlined and forced to populate in only 3 of 8 counties in Connecticut. (Hartford County, New Haven County, and Fairfield County). These counties have the most disparities, as they are environmentally unsafe, food deserts, overpopulated and extremely undervalued.

I personally feel racially biased as I try to find secure housing for myself and my family. The average rent in Ct is closer 1300 a month, while at the same time requiring that an individual makes 2.5-3.5 the monthly rent. Connecticut has the highest income inequality between blacks and whites in the nation according to a CT Mirror article. Our income levels do not equate to the standards set by wealthy white counterparts. Also the requirements for deposits are 3 sometimes 4x the rent. I had to quit my minimum wage, dead end job, become an independent contractor to increase my pay and credit score, just to have the landlord required a month deposit and 3 months rent upon moving in. Also blacks make up the highest group of incarcerated persons or persons on parole/probation in the state. Yet another black group restricted from acquiring adequate housing. Seeing as more than 75% of the black populace live in 3 counties, the three most impoverished and crime ridden counties in the state. Seeing that multi-dwelling homes for the most part are non-existent in other counties like Essex, Middlesex, Windham, Norwich, etc., as well as the refusal of landlords in these areas to take on black patrons with housing vouchers or rent assistance. Ct is wholly segregated in reference to the black populace and it's time for a change to the structural racism that has plagued the Black American Descendants of Chattel Slavery since slavery and the post-slavery herding. Then the use of redlining by law, banks, and private citizens have locked us out of generational wealth and adequate housing for our families.

In closing, I'd like to expound upon the facts, my personal experiences and opinions. In 2009 14 Legislatures, in the House & Judiciary Committee, unanimously decided to pass House Joint Resolution 1.

January Session, 2009 | House Joint Resolution No. 1

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through REP. SPALLONE of the 36th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the joint resolution ought to be adopted. April 15, 2009

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND REGRET OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE HISTORY OF WRONGS INFLICTED UPON BLACK CITIZENS BY MEANS OF SLAVERY, EXPLOITATION AND LEGALIZED RACIAL SEGREGATION, AND CALLING ON ALL CITIZENS TO TAKE PART IN ACTS OF RACIAL RECONCILIATION.

SUMMARY:

Through this resolution, the General Assembly:

1. issues an apology for slavery practiced in Connecticut and the official acts that sanctioned and perpetuated it;
2. vows to work to eliminate the residual structures of racism existing in the state;
3. urges educational, religious, civic, and business entities to acknowledge and learn from Connecticut's past, including as a leading state in the abolition efforts, to promote racial equality and reconciliation; and
4. calls on residents to recommit their state, communities, and themselves to work daily to promote equality, as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence; treat all people with respect; and eliminate racial prejudices and injustices.

The resolution provides a brief history of how Connecticut first supported slavery and then worked toward its abolition. It acknowledges that several nations, states, and corporations have issued apologies for their roles in promoting slavery.

Absolutely none of the above referenced vows have been adhered to. However, Connecticut continues to be complicit in the eerily reminiscent practices of the Jim Crow Era. We have to do much better and stop sweeping these issues underneath the rug. A Truth and Reconciliation of the historical discriminative practices and systematic racism / oppression must be addressed on all levels for Black/ African American's rights to Liberty and the Pursuit Equal Happiness. Studying the Inequities/ Inequalities of Black American Descendants of Chattel Slavery can viewed through another lens as why the consistently disparities in the Black communities, Without doing so, the is apology means absolutely nothing.

I thank you for taking the time to hear me today, Your anticipated assistance in working working toward remedies and resolutions in the communities,

Have a Wonderful Day!

James Keitt
SoliDarity