



RUTLAND AREA BRANCH OF THE NAACP

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My name is Mia Schultz, I am the President of the Rutland Area Branch President. I am writing testimony on behalf of H.210 "An act relating to addressing disparities and promoting equity in the health care system."

As detailed in this bill, evidence demonstrates that there is an unacceptable level of inequality among communities of color in the healthcare system. This disparity in the healthcare system for Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) has been further exposed during the COVID 19 pandemic.. COVID 19 data is also reflected in the aforementioned bill.

The current COVID 19 data being collected by race was initiated by the efforts of my predecessor, Former President of The Rutland Area NAACP and the Steffen Gillom, Windham County NAACP President and other racial justice advocates. Were it not for their diligence to collect this data, the disparity and discrepancies in data would not have been collected nor noticed. This is precisely why there is a need for a Health Equity that includes the voices and expertise of the most impacted. This bill has included that representation outlined.

I request that the committee pass this legislation with the following consideration of modification and/or amendment:

- Include Healthcare American Rescue Plan Act funding allocation responsibility to the advisory committee
- Explore definition of "non-white" language with data collection process. This language centers whiteness as the core measure and is problematic.
- Include a date to explore expansion of this bill for a more inclusive and future systemic change with the respective racial and social justice entities.

The passage of this act is a step toward inclusion in healthcare equity for the state of Vermont and I support it as such. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Moving forward,

/s/ Mia Schultz

Mia Schultz

President

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Pronouns: she/her/hers