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RE: SB24-053 The Racial Equity Study Support Letter

Good Afternoon,

As a Colorado native born in the year of the Brown v. Board of Education decision, I have a lived experience of the many structural inequities in this country. Many mistakenly think that since we are above the Mason-Dixon line, these structural inequities don't apply to us. This is why this study is so important.

I recall moving to different neighborhoods as a child and seeing the ForSale signs in yards as white flight began. Black homeowners have appraisals that come in far less than their white counterparts. Gentrification is making it difficult for the elderly to stay in their homes due to high property taxes. We have witnessed the profiling and policing in Colorado that has historical context in the lynching of Preston Porter, Jr. in 1900 to the murder of Marvin Booker in 2010 to the murder of Elijah McClain in 2019.

As an educator, I have witnessed children of color having to prove their academic prowess to get a seat in an AP class while white children simply come in and take a seat. School buildings with high numbers of children of color have gone without libraries, nurses, adequate books and supplies, and a stable culturally competent teacher workforce. High suspension rates are also often an issue.

Medical care is another issue. The maternal mortality rate of Black women is three times higher than whites. It has been documented that there are doctors and med students who believe Black people feel less pain than whites. These biases affect our family structures in a dire way!

These are a few examples of the structural and systemic inequities plague Colorado and other states across this nation.

This proposed study will create an avenue to explore how Colorado can be a leader in dismantling the systemic structures that were designed to negatively impact people of color. It is an opportunity to correct wrongs and uplift everyone. It will provide an avenue where all have the possibility to succeed. A place where everyone will have boots thus bootstraps with opportunities to pull ourselves up as well as our fellow neighbors.

I fully support this bill for the study of racial inequities both historically and at present in Colorado.

Sincerely,
Tamara Rhone, M.Ed
TamRho, LLC