

Dear RI House Education Committee,

I am writing in opposition to H5836 in hopes it never makes it to the floor. Here is why:

- RI Schools are already failing to do an excellent, or even good, job at teaching the existing core requirements. How will adding a new core requirement help this urgent effort to teach the basics to our students?

- This bill adds a core requirement. This new core requirement would come at the cost of removing an existing core requirement. Which one? You can't seriously answer this question, so you can't invent this new requirement for all RI high schools to follow.

- The failure to include Jews as a minority says everything you need to know about the intent of the authors of this bill and the people and organizations who back them. This is **exactly** how it started in California.

- California's ethnic studies curriculum was an antisemitic mess from the beginning and has spawned legal showdowns in many counties across California, and other states are following the same pattern. We can't let this happen in Rhode Island.

- This bill uses a "student led" front and care to tell the stories of minorities to appeal to progressive tendencies. It's a ruse. The fact is that this won't be student led. The curriculum will be fed in by the authors of the blatantly antisemitic Ethnic Studies curriculum in the State of California.

- Curriculum experts, not students, should write curriculum, with input from various stakeholders.

- Would our schools' curriculum benefit from more attention to the plight of immigrants and minorities and multiculturalism in this country? Sure. Does it require a special core requirement to accomplish this? Absolutely not. For example:

* When you teach about US History, which is a story of immigration, you can teach about how each successive minority faced a set of unique forces. Columbus day became a holiday that was not for Columbus but rather to recognize Italians who were being lynched, because they weren't white. You can teach about how Roger Williams founded Rhode Island because of religious discrimination he faced in Massachusetts. You can teach about the discrimination the Irish faced in Rhode Island. You can teach about how Jews forged a path for Diversity on College Campuses as they faced rampant discrimination on campus from the 1920s to 1960s (and now face a veritable tsunami of antisemitism on campus). You can teach about how Asian Americans faced terrible discrimination during WW2, just as Islam faces suspicion after 9/11 and after 10/7. You can talk about how immigration limits were placed on different classes of people, such as Jews, up to and during the Holocaust, and Latin American immigrants today.

* When you teach social justice, you can teach that Jews invented social justice with the story of Passover. Then sought it over and over in an effort to achieve security in the face of a series of conquerors in their homeland.

* When you teach about slavery, you can teach that Jews are the subject of the first and most famous story of slavery and the importance of being free of oppression. We can all learn from Passover, which is the point of Passover. So hand out the matzoh and class and settle in for serious discussion.

* When you teach about slavery, you can teach about the Arab Islamic slave trade as compared to the Atlantic slave trade, and you can compare the Latin American Slave Trade (in years and numbers) to the North American slave trade. Then you can teach about the specifics of slavery in the USA. So, instead of teaching slavery as a uniquely white on brown phenomenon, you can cover all the bases on how the ages old institution of slavery has effected all peoples of all cultures over all time, including where its happening today.

* When you teach about Jim Crow laws, you can teach how they affected Black Americans and how the Nazi's used that model to racialize Jews and create structural racist antisemitism in Germany and beyond.

* IF you teach about Critical Race Theory (and that is a big IF for various reasons), you can teach about where it came from: Critical Theory, which was invented by Jews as a model to describe the ethnic antisemitism they faced in Europe.

* When you teach about the effect of Colonialism on Indigenous Americans you can teach about how opportunities should be made available to them to achieve a sort of Zionism, as Jews have been a model for how an indigenous people can recover a culture, language and entire society if given the chance (even while integrating other minorities!)

* When you teach about Colonialism, you can teach about the religious impact of colonialism on Africa (Islamic and Christian influence), then explain how colonialism affected South, Central and North America.

So, yes, all these ideas make sense as part of existing curriculum and should be carefully considered by our curriculum experts, in a way that is thoughtful, analytical, not antisemitic, and that helps our students perform better in the existing core requirements. We do not need a separate requirement and we do not want the political interference of the antisemitic ethnic studies movement.

— Jordan Frank
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