

To: Chair Joseph M. McNamara
Members of the RI House Education Committee

From: **Dr. Michael Brodeur, Psy.D. (Resident of District 18, Cranston, RI)**

Date: April 22nd, 2025

Re: **Support for House Bill 5836**

I am writing to express my **strong support for House Bill 5836, which will enrich high school education by integrating ethnic studies into the curriculum**

Students deserve a truthful and comprehensive history education that does not sanitize oppression or enslavement. As a psychologist and a white man, I recognize the discomfort that comes with learning about the racial trauma perpetrated by people who often look like me in the history books. However, this discomfort is minor and short-lived compared to the lived experiences of BIPOC and marginalized communities who have endured racial trauma for centuries, only to see their histories erased or distorted in school curricula.

The story of BIPOC communities neither begins nor ends with colonization. By passing **H5836**, students will learn how African, Indigenous, and Asian societies were pioneers in knowledge production and innovation in technology, science, and healthcare. Students will also gain knowledge of cultural strengths, languages, customs, and values inherent to these ethnic groups. This knowledge helps white students and others outside these ethnic groups dismantle stereotypes and correct historical misinformation.

Psychology is facing its own reckoning with critical history. The American Psychological Association's recent apologies to people of color¹ and Indigenous communities² highlight how psychologists were complicit in supporting racist policies, such as forced sterilizations and Indigenous boarding schools. This critical history was largely absent in my doctoral training. Since learning about this history, I feel that my clinical care for clients from diverse ethnic groups has improved because I'm better equipped with knowledge about their cultural history and their cultural strengths. I can only imagine how much better equipped future psychologists will be if they gain access to this knowledge in high school, and how they will be better positioned to navigate and contribute to an increasingly diverse and interconnected society.

I urge you to support H5836 and the inclusion of critical history as an essential—not optional—component of high school curriculum.

Sincerely,



Michael Brodeur, Psy.D.
Clinical Psychologist (RI# PS01356)

¹ American Psychological Association. (2021, October 29). Apology to people of color for APA's role in promoting, perpetuating, and failing to challenge racism, racial discrimination, and human hierarchy in U.S. <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/racism-apology>

² American Psychological Association, APA Indigenous Apology Work Group. (2023). An offer of apology to First Peoples in the United States. <https://www.apa.org/pubs/reports/indigenous-apology.pdf>