

Please do not endorse the H5836 ethnic studies bill.

The mandating of curriculum without specifying detailed content and a specific draft curriculum is dangerous. Item (g)(1) mandates a council of high school students to oversee curriculum development and implementation. This should be left to educational experts and community representatives from various ethnic groups (including groups that are missing such as Portuguese, Jewish, Irish, Italian, French, etc.), especially the dangers of misinformation that dominate the internet and social media.

The bill lists specific communities to be included (Native American, Black, Asian American, Armenian, Arab American, Latin American) but does not mention Jewish Americans, despite their significant historical presence and unique experiences with discrimination in the U.S. and Rhode Island. By prioritizing specific racial/ethnic groups and ideologies, the bill risks favoring certain viewpoints over others, creating a state-sponsored narrative. When selectively including or excluding ethnic groups from the curriculum, you violate the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.

I am also concerned about the promotion of Anti-Israel and Antisemitic Narratives because of what we are seeing in other school districts where "student-led ethnic studies leadership councils" are really outside groups with anti-Israel or antisemitic agendas.

If the ethnic studies curriculum is implemented in a way that is perceived as discriminatory or hostile toward Jewish students, Rhode Island schools could face investigations, lawsuits, or the loss of federal education dollars. The Trump administration has signaled a zero-tolerance approach to race-based programming and would view this bill as both legally and politically unacceptable, exposing Rhode Island schools to significant legal and financial risk.

Please reject this bill and any others that are nefarious.

Thank you,
Morris Polsky