



February 23, 2022

Members of the Education Policy Committee
House of Representatives
State Office Building
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: OPPOSE HF 3434

Dear Members,

Minnesota Family Council represents tens of thousands of families across the state, and we **urge you to oppose HF 3434**.

The history of ethnic minorities within the state of Minnesota and the United States at large should be taught, including the lived experiences of racism and discrimination. However, this lived history is not “ethnic studies” as defined by HF 3434. As defined in the bill, ethnic studies “means the critical and interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity with a focus on the experiences and perspectives of people of color within and beyond the United States.”¹ In other words, the study of history would be through the lens of critical theory, also referred to as critical race theory.

Critical race theory (CRT) is a subject area derived from critical theory which claims that the United States was founded upon racism, white supremacy, and patriarchy. The theory states that racism was a foundational ideal of the nation and still directs every relationship of civil society. According to CRT advocates, the solution to this society supposedly founded upon racism and discrimination can be found in various pursuits of so-called racial equity.

One of the leading proponents of CRT is author and speaker Ibram X. Kendi. In his book, *How to Be an Antiracist*, Kendi claims the solution to historical racism is current racism, stating, “The only remedy to racist discrimination is antiracist discrimination. The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination.”²

Promoters of CRT state that disparate outcomes in education are a direct result of racism. For example, Professor Wayne Au of the University of Washington Bothell has argued, “[The] historical roots of high-stakes, standardised testing [is] in racism, nativism, and eugenics...”³ They contend that persistent racism will exist until we see equal outcomes in education.

The Edina Public School (EPS) system provides a case study of the effect of critical race theory in a Minnesota public school. In the past, the EPS was prized for its students’ high academic performance; however, EPS experienced a well-documented drop in reading proficiency from 2014 to 2017.

What are the variables which changed during those few years? In 2013, EPS adopted a policy titled “All for All.” According to the school district’s website, “Edina Public Schools is committed to looking at all district work and initiatives through a lens of racial equity.”⁴ When the student body must end the school year with

an equivalent grade, performance is reduced to the lowest common denominator, lowering achievement for all students.

Regardless of a high schooler's ethnic background, critical race theory does not offer a tangible solution to disparities. Where CRT has been taught in schools, the resulting ideas and outcomes have been observed:

- According to this theory, genetics have placed each student into a power hierarchy.
- Students feel ashamed of their identity, adopting an understanding of self through racial stereotypes.
- A subsection of students is taught that they are immutably victimized, causing a victim mentality among the groups of people CRT claims to support.
- Other students are told that they were born with inherent racism. The ideology of CRT causes some students to feel shame and to retreat from discourse due to skin color.
- CRT advocates that all interactions, all history, and all outcomes can be explained by racism.

Before this theory becomes mandated for high schoolers, an appropriate question would be as follows: Can it be proven that all interactions, all history, and all civil outcomes are explained by racism? The answer is no; although racism is a variable of societal reality, it is one of many, and to write off other variables is simplistic.

High schoolers deserve better than the forced shouldering of weighty shame due to immutable characteristics. We urge House committee members to oppose HF 3434. The Minnesota legislature should be drafting legislation that protects the rights of all students, rather than legislation that directs schools to create policies demanding different but not equal treatment. All high schoolers must be taught that their classmates are equals. History should be taught in an unbiased fashion that encourages students to appreciate heritage while acknowledging the ways in which our ancestors have fallen short of founding ideals, inspiring students to collaboratively live up to those ideals.

In closing, I remind committee members of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s immortalized civil rights speech on August 28, 1963: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today." We share that dream. HF 3434 does not advance that dream; therefore, we urge you to oppose it.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Delahunt
Assistant Director of Public Policy

¹HF 3434 (2022).

²Kendi, I. X. (2021). *How to Be an Antiracist*. Vintage.

³Au, W. (2013). Hiding behind high-stakes testing: Meritocracy, objectivity and inequality in U.S. education. *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, 12, 12–12.

⁴Edina Public Schools. (2022). *Equity*. Edina Public Schools District. Retrieved February 21, 2022, from <https://www.edinaschools.org/abouteps/equity>