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Testimony for: Minnesota House Education Policy Committee
From: Amy R. Buchmeyer, JD, HSLDA Staff Attorney
Date: March 23, 2022
Re: HF3401 DE1

Dear Chair Richardson and Members of the Education Policy Committee,

By way of introduction, the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) is a national organization committed to protecting the fundamental constitutional right of parents to direct the education and upbringing of their children. With over 106,000 member families, including over 2,000 in Minnesota, we are the world's largest homeschool advocacy organization.

On behalf of those families, HSLDA opposes the addition of “ethnic studies” as a required, core subject listed under Sec. 120A.22, subdivision 9, MN Statutes, found on line 22.9 of HF3401 DE1.

Minnesota's compulsory school attendance law states that parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that a child acquires the knowledge and skills essential for effective citizenship.¹ If this is true normally, it is doubly so when a parent exercises their constitutional right to educate their child at home. The state is no longer responsible for the education of that student.

Homeschooling parents have a right and a duty to provide the best education for their children. Adding additional course requirements unnecessarily burdens the exercise of that right. Many parents choose homeschooling because it provides the flexibility to tailor a curriculum to meet their child's individual needs. Additional course requirements create further hurdles for parents, limiting their ability to adjust to their student's unique needs. Failure to comply with this new requirement would be a violation of the compulsory attendance law. Homeschools do not look like public or private schools—nor should they. Forced standardization and conformity stifles the very flexibility from which homeschooled children benefit.

When educating their own child, a parent agrees to meet the basic requirements listed in the compulsory school attendance statute, including four broad subject areas: basic communication skills including reading and writing, literature, and fine arts; mathematics and science; social studies including history, geography, economics, government, and citizenship; and health and physical education.

“Ethnic studies” is out of place as a fifth category on this list. It is not as broad as the other subject areas and more accurately fits under the social studies category. There are other, more appropriate places in the

¹ Sec. 120A.22 MN Statutes



statute to list ethnic studies as a requirement, and they are already listed in this bill under the provisions for public school students.

The addition of another required subject to Sec. 120A.22 undermines the purpose of the statute and prevents parents *who have taken authority of their children's education* from fully exercising that authority to educate their children in effective citizenship as they see fit.

Therefore, we ask you to remove line 22.9.