

HJ0003_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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TESTIMONY ON HJ#/0003 – FAVORABLE

Elementary and Secondary Education - Curriculum - Importance of Diversity

TO: Chair Healey, Vice Chair Holmes, and members of the Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HJ#0003, Elementary and Secondary Education - Curriculum - Importance of Diversity

The Drexel University School of Education has documented *The Importance of Diversity & Multicultural Awareness in Education* ¹

[Fostering inclusion](#) and awareness around multicultural education and taking a culturally responsive approach to teaching benefits all students. Not only does creating greater multicultural awareness and inclusion help students with different backgrounds and needs succeed, but it encourages acceptance and helps prepare students to thrive in an exponentially diverse world.

Every student is unique. In order to properly understand and promote cultural awareness, teachers need to understand all the different types of diversity they may encounter in their classrooms including: Race, Ethnicity, Religion, Language, Socioeconomic Status, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity

The Harvard Graduate School of Education has stated that schools need to be *Teaching the Hard Histories of Racism* ²

The history of the United States is full of truths that are difficult to reconcile with the messages of freedom and democracy. What does it mean to be living on land taken from Indigenous people? How can a nation recognize that many of its institutions were built and made possible by the labor of enslaved people? Teaching students how to be historians in the 21st century means inviting complexity and hidden narratives into the conversation.

“Students become historians and understand history when educators give students the tools and opportunities to make their own determinations about the world and figure out how they want to make change in the world and what they want their roles to be...

¹ <https://drexel.edu/soe/resources/student-teaching/advice/importance-of-cultural-diversity-in-classroom/#:~:text=Students%20Gain%20a%20Better%20Understanding,different%20cultures%20and%20social%20groups.>

² <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ideas/usable-knowledge/21/02/teaching-hard-histories-racism#:~:text=The%20history%20of%20the%20United,Racism%20in%20the%20United%20States.>

The hostility of the current Federal Administration to these policies, dubbing them as support of “DEI”, is harmful to giving students the truth about American history and the cultures of the marginalized communities that have made this nation.

The Trump administration has actively sought to eliminate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives within the U.S. Department of Education, labeling them as discriminatory and wasteful. Key actions include dismantling the Diversity & Inclusion Council, removing DEI materials, and threatening to cut federal funding for schools with such programs.³

Maryland supports as a core value the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout our state and education about upholding these principles as critical to our state.

This bill will acknowledge the importance of teaching a culturally diverse curriculum in elementary and secondary schools in the State; provide that curricula taught in elementary and secondary schools should include the history of communities that have experienced discrimination; and affirm the State of Maryland's commitment to a complete education.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass HJ0003.

³ Google AI Search “trump administration education department hostility to dei”