

I believe students in Oregon should learn American history. And I believe they should learn the history that affects their life and society they are entering. America has many themes that runs through its history. One is the quest for freedom. One is the quest for prosperity. And one is the theme of racism that has run unabated since white explorers and settlers reached our North American shores in the 16th and 17th centuries. This racism has shaped our map, our government, our population, our everyday existence. This history of racism has been so constant, that for many it has ironically been invisible. Its companionship has been a given. And, while it was almost always visible to its victims, and often to its intentional perpetrators, just as often it has been unseen by many passive beneficiaries.

The events of 2020 have begun to bring visibility. The names, George Floyd, Breanna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery still resonate, and will for a while longer. Then they will join the names of Rev. George Lee, Clyde Kennard, Viola Liuzzo, Hezekiah Dee and the women of Sand Creek, as names that can be found in library books, but that bring no recognition.

SB 683 creates the opportunity to teach Oregon students that America's narrative isn't simple. And it isn't easy. Yet, it is ours. And each generation, taught the truth, taught the skills to see what is close by, can create new chapters that become more inclusive, more free, more prosperous. I support this bill and the goals it seeks to accomplish