

I oppose this bill as written.

First and foremost, the observation that there is such split in opposing views on this tells me that there is insufficient common agreement on the topic for it to be taught to all children in our schools. The threshold for decision as to what is taught in public schools should be exceedingly high in terms of public consensus; subject matter should reflect the vast majority of common values because schools are universally for the vast majority of kids. Clearly, far too many people have concerns over this bill and thus it should be tabled until the public is widely convinced it is necessary. That has clearly not been achieved and, as such, pushing this through will cause a major rift in our state and perhaps even cause many families to leave the school system altogether for other options. This is not good for a society seeking unity.

Second, this bill appears to be very broad based for addressing a topic that is already at least to some extent covered in existing coursework. It's unclear the extent to which subjects will be revised or the aggressiveness by which such revisions will be undertaken. It should be clear that the core elements of the positive attributes of our unique American system and its history will be maintained in the midst of such revisions. Unfortunately, this bill has undertones of potentially overwhelming changes that are unclear, especially given some of the broad pronouncements of its recitals, and risks related curriculum becoming overly myopic.

In conclusion, before this bill is passed, extensive research should be conducted on what the substantial majority of the Oregon public views as specifically important to teach on the subject and what the extent of changes should be, which should then be outlined in any revised proposed bill if one is still warranted.