

March 9, 2021

To the Oregon Senate Committee on Education,

I am submitting testimony in support of SB 683: The Anti-Racism Curriculum Act (ARCA). I write as a college-level educator in Oregon (teaching experience at University of Oregon in Eugene and at Southern Oregon University in Ashland), a heritage professional (archaeologist by training, and current staff member at the Southern Oregon Historical Society), and stepparent to two high schoolers who are in the midst of learning about our nation's history.

In my experience, a thorough, well-rounded history education is vital tool for helping all people understand where we are, where we are going, and how we got here, and is an essential component to being a good citizen of our society. History helps us to think critically and to see how certain circumstances, events, and acts of human agency resulted in the world we live in today.

Accuracy, multi-vocality, and comprehensiveness are immensely important parts of an unbiased history education. This is particularly important when it comes to educating on race and racism, topics which have too often been misrepresented or ignored. We do a disservice to our students when we fail to tell them the whole and complete story of race and racism — the parts we are proud of, and the parts we are not — because this is essential knowledge for understanding why our world looks as it does today. In fact, ignoring historic injustices is anathema to the enterprise of history education as a whole.

No doubt race and racism are difficult subjects to address and teach, but this does not preclude their significance. I am inspired by ARCA's commitment to providing resources and curriculum to educators to ensure that these topics are being presented in a thorough manner, and that teachers are supported in presenting them.

An accurate and honest history education is empowering for the learner, as it provides the tools necessary to assess and understand our current society and our place in it. I am deeply in favor of ARCA, a bill that I believe will benefit all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Anna Sloan