



February 10, 2021

Chair Michael Dembrow
Vice-Chair Chuck Thomsen
Members of the Senate Education Committee

RE: SB 227 – Relating to Ethnic Studies Standards and Professional Learning Opportunities

Good afternoon Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Thomsen, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in strong support of appropriating funds to the Department of Education for the Educator Advancement Council to provide professional learning opportunities related to ethnic studies standards adopted by the department. My name is Elona J Wilson, and I am the Advocacy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC), an alliance of [culturally specific community-based organizations](#) with representation from African, African American, Latinx, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Slavic communities in Oregon.

The Coalition of Communities of Color's mission is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.

In 2017, CCC fought for the passage of HB 2845 requiring ethnic studies curriculum in grades K–12. With bipartisan support, this historic legislation was the first of its kind in the country and it represents a critical step toward dismantling white supremacy by ensuring that school curriculum integrates the unique histories, perspectives, and contributions of people of color.

Though this was a great first step, in 2026 school districts will be required to adopt instructional materials that align with these standards. Our teachers do not have support and training to implement this curriculum successfully. This is why we urge you to pass SB 227 as the first step to intentional implementation of ethnic studies in our Oregon schools.

We say first step because it is not the end all, be all. In order to intentionally implement ethnic studies we must also provide funding for this curriculum. Teachers around the state have been searching for a





free online curriculum to hand to their students because there is no curriculum provided, nor is there training. How do we expect teachers to know how to effectively teach ethnic studies with no training? In addition, how do we know that the free curriculum that is found online is getting to the true purpose of HB 2845?

We must answer these questions with action by providing funding to districts for professional development and further, creating a curriculum that is statewide. As we do this work, we must do it together. Partnerships with community based organizations such as Latino Network, Unite Oregon, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, APANO, and others to engage in these training teams and as consultants to implement this bill will ensure that community is heard and that ethnic studies can begin to be intentionally implemented.

This bill must be strengthened by a systematic planning of ethnic studies as part of the Oregon State Standards for this intentional implementation to be successful.

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, I urge you to take action to intentionally implement ethnic studies by supporting SB 227. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 227.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elona J. Wilson".

Elona J Wilson
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