

My name is Stephen West

I am from District 31. I support SB196 because: I don't believe that the Schools should be promoting a government agenda, I also believe CRT is promoting the division of races.

Thank you for your time!

Greetings from Kodiak. Thank you for your services to our state. I am deeply concerned that the Critical Race Theory being taught in schools will eventually result in a form of privatization of those institutions, which none of our founding fathers and mothers would ever want. The nations which have privatized education, have experienced great damage to many of their citizens.

Teresa Storch

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee,

SB 196 is an unnecessary angry gust of wind.

The knee-jerk reaction that Critical Race Theory is being taught in our public schools is a misnomer, that angry, paranoid, individuals are propelling for their own personal gain and re-election.

If this bill is allowed to become law, it will not only create a bureaucratic hailstorm for districts, schools, and teachers, but it will also have a chilling effect on teacher's abilities to have discussions that help our students develop critical thinking skills in general.

This bill is claiming its purpose to be about creating transparency. There already IS transparency in the schools, and worried parents are always encouraged to ask questions, which is between them, their teachers, schools, and districts.

As a white, middle-aged mom of three children (youngest in high school), I have always welcomed opposing thoughts in the classroom and haven't worried about my children growing up having to question their privilege, or "whiteness". If one of my kids came home stating something that led me to believe one of their teachers stated something of "opinion" rather than an educational fact, I would (most importantly) discuss it with my child. Also, I felt no inhibition in being able to approach the teacher over the matter. That is ALREADY our prerogative as parents, and a welcome opportunity to discuss important issues with ones' child. Additionally, teachers always communicate what they're teaching through weekly updates or newsletters.

As a mom of one gay child and one who is transitioning, I'm especially enraged by this bill's couched intent: to silence those who are already marginalized. More assistance in discriminating against those who are already marginalized is NOT needed. It's already there.

This bill is a so-called "solution" looking for a problem, and serves only to further divide our communities, state and country. It opens a rotten can of worms and should die in committee.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Putt Clark

Fairbanks, AK

Dear Senators:

I would like to voice my opposition to SB 196. First and foremost it is a gag order for teachers to bring up current events and teach the facts of our history. It is totally against our democracy working towards "a more perfect union." It is also a violation of free speech for administrators, teachers and students. It will be a waste of money to have it go directly to the courts for school districts and the state.

In this bill, you are villainizing teachers, assuming they "indoctrinate" when in fact they present all sides of issues to nurture critical thinking for students. In addition, the bill forbids teachers from encouraging students to become active citizens by learning how to get their voices heard, no matter what side of an issue they fall on.

As you well know, being on the Education committee, teachers are overwhelmed with all they have to do. It is directly impacting recruitment and retention. Adding the burden of posting every material they use in the classroom is redundant to what the school district already requires being posted. A good teacher will have a myriad of materials based on the needs of each student and class and should have the freedom to use what is needed within the parameters that already exist.

For these and many more reasons, I feel this is not a bill that should go out of this committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to get my voice heard and recorded in the public record.

Sincerely yours,

Mary C Burtness
Fairbanks, Alaska

Honorable Senate Education Committee,

My name is Adam Hykes, and I am a resident of Homer, Ak.
On behalf of my Wife and I, we support SB 196.

Thank you SO much Sneator ReinBold and Senator Costello for crafting this bill to end the indoctrination of our children through academia. This bill is MUCH needed, and I will support it, as I am able, as it makes its way through committee(s).

Sincerely,
-The Hykes Family

Dear Senators of the Education Committee,

Good day and thank you for the work you do everyday for Alaskans. I am writing to express my deep opposition to SB 196, which would injure student learning by chilling vital discussions of history and reducing engagement in political processes. Our students need to be encouraged to think critically and inclusively to imagine and create an equitable and just world. No one person or group is individually responsible, but erasing the brutality of our history is akin to condoning white supremacy and all manifestations of willful ignorance and bigotry. I am white and privileged, and I don't even have children, but I dread a state where schools are not a place of open discourse. I urge you, do not waste Alaska's precious time with this fearful response to progress toward a truly free and fair multicultural society. Please, let this bill die - again - in committee.

Thank you,
Anna Godduhn

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a teacher at Brevig Mission School. Thoughtful discussion of race and gender is a crucial part of our students education. Race and gender are topics that my students think about on a daily basis. If we restrict these discussions in school, students will be left confused and alienated, as they will not be able to discuss the topics that are at the forefront of their minds. It is crucial for education to meet students' needs, including their need to discuss topics that are concerning to them.

I oppose this bill.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Siegel

I've been an educator in Kasigluk and LKSD schools since 2003.

I'm OK with transparency and believe public schools should be open to public scrutiny, just as I believe the legislature should be. More parental involvement in our schools would be a good thing!

Yes of course the classroom should not be a venue for political activism, nor lobbying.

But it should be a venue for learning about history and true current events. And I'm guessing that that counts as "political activism" for some of you. This bill feels like an attempt to remove controversial topics from the curriculum and keep students uninformed.

If I'm teaching a current events class, could we read this story from KTOO in 2020?

"As [Anchorage] grew, so did the use of restrictive covenants, which were attached to thousands of deeds, forbidding the sale of property to [black people and Alaska natives]. The Civil Rights Act — the one which prohibited housing discrimination as part of the Fair Housing Act — wasn't passed until 1968. Even after it passed, the covenants stayed on the books. Thousands of homes in Anchorage still have them." If we cover this in class, am I guilty of "lobbying" my students?

Can we talk about racial disparities? What if a high school teacher covers the fact that black men in the USA are incarcerated at rates 5 or 6 times higher than white men, per capita? Isn't that really important information, and if someone is ignorant of this, aren't they missing something really important? Or what if we talk about the disparities today for Alaska natives in rates of diabetes, or incarceration, or accidental death? Is that political activism?

If I'm teaching economics or sociology, can I mention this staggering truth? *At \$171,000, the net worth of a typical white family is nearly ten times greater than that of a Black family (\$17,150) in 2016.*

Or is the intent of this bill to give teachers the freedom to teach an "alternate truth" about topics like this? I sense that it's mostly about giving teachers the freedom to NOT cover issues like these, even if they should. The freedom to be in denial and leave their students uninformed and in the dark.

The reasons for all of these issues are incredibly complex, and inherently controversial and political. These issues warrant rigorous research and discussion in the full light of day, and not denial. If you say these issues are irrelevant to America, then I say you lie or you have your head in the sand. Covering them does not mean a teacher needs to advocate for one position or the other, but they must be covered, or we do our children and nation a disservice.

I really wish the legislature would want the state's educators to dig into these major societal problems with high schoolers, present multiple points of view, and then let the STUDENTS grapple with the data, form their own opinions, and put forth arguments as to why that is, and what can be done about it, and to make reasoned and civil counterarguments.

-Peter Schneider

Kasigluk, AK

Dear Senate Education Committee members:

I absolutely support passage of this bill.

I was very frustrated with teachers for both my children at all grade levels in the FNSB school district. Instead of a syllabus, I was routinely given a list of class rules labeled "syllabus." When I asked to see a reading list, I was told there wasn't one. When I asked to see textbooks, I was told there weren't any being used.

I discovered my 7th grader in social studies was being taught that all atheists are peaceful people but Christians and Jews are bigoted war mongers. The teacher had unilaterally decided to teach her warped version of "comparative religion." When I brought her factually and egregiously incorrect lessons to the attention of the principal, I was told we would have a "mediation" meeting. I pointed out that comparative religion lessons were not in the school district published curriculum and therefore there was nothing to "mediate." To get my daughter out of that class, I had to go to the district superintendent and fight. Two years later, that teacher was still teaching the same nonsense. Neither the principal nor the superintendent had directed her to teach only the approved curriculum.

This was merely one of the numerous bad experiences I had with teachers in our district who did not follow approved curriculum and deliberately obscured what they were teaching my children.

Parents absolutely have the right to a transparent curriculum. Children should be protected from the racist CRT propaganda being forced upon them. Children should be protected from the insane gender ideology which is also promulgated in FNSB school district schools. At this point, I am disgusted with our public schools. I feel that my children received a terrible public school education, and I would certainly never put another child in a FNSB school district school. My children escaped lasting and irreversible damage only by the grace of God.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ansley

Hello,

I absolutely oppose this bill. Gender, race, and diversity issues need to be discussed at all levels in our society, and particularly in schools, to make progress on bringing awareness to implicit biases, internalized oppression, and institutionalized racism. As a student clinician for mental health counseling, I am testifying that students in our schools and society as a whole experience micro- and macro-aggressions on a daily basis, and that these issues, if not sufficiently addressed, have detrimental effects on students mental health including suicidal ideation, addictions, and turning to crime-all major challenges in our society. This includes all students including those who identify as white, straight, and cis gender. How is SB 196 supporting student mental health and our fight against teen suicide, high school drop out, addiction, and drug crimes?

Sincerely,

Silvia Daeumichen

I feel like this bill is a giant sledgehammer to address something that isn't even an issue in this state and is just political grandstanding.

Sincerely,

Alice Stickney

Ester, AK

I am vehemently opposed to this bill.

I am a parent of 6; 4 of whom attend FNSB borough schools; school volunteer, and a business owner here in Fairbanks.

Diversity, race, and gender issues are ever present in our society. They are important, critical topics and we need to have conversations about how and when they are discussed in schools, where they most definitely belong.

Sincerely,

Liann M Peryea

I oppose SB 196.

Respectfully, our kids should be able to hear discussions about race and gender. Our teachers should have grounds to discuss issues with students and to have diversity training in school. Without these discussions and trainings the likelihood of discrimination rises.

Quincy D. Fuller

Dear Senate Education committee.

This email is being sent to register my opposition to AB 196.

Thank you,
Cathy Walling
Fairbanks, Alaska

State of Alaska
Senate Education Committee

SB 196 “An Act related to transparency and compelled speech in public education”

I oppose SB 196 because it will place teachers a risk, discourage political involvement by students and effectively prohibit any discussion of race, racial conflict history, ethnicity or sexuality in primary, secondary and post-secondary education.

Section 14.18.150. Transparency. Requires that schools display on their website “all instructional or curricular material that primarily addresses nondiscrimination, diversity, equity, inclusion, race, ethnicity, sex, bias, or another concept that includes one or more of those concepts;”. This is so broad that it could be interpreted to require schools (including the university) to post all history and social science material on their website or be at risk of violating the provisions of this law and being potentially liable to suit by any “aggrieved” member of the public.

The section further requires if a teacher created the material, the identity of the teacher be posted on the school’s website; again, this could be interpreted to require all history and social science material presented by a teacher to be posted to the school’s website and the teacher be identified. This will place teachers at risk.

Section 14.18.160. Prohibiting compelled speech. This section prohibits teachers from including in a course discussion of political activism towards local state or federal governments. Do you really think that it is in the best interest of this country to prohibit teaching that students should question authority or to become politically involved to work towards improving our representative government? We should be encouraging students to think for themselves; they should question everything and ask where is the proof.

Section 14.18.100. Remedies. This section virtually begs any “aggrieved” member of the public to enter into frivolous lawsuits against primary, secondary and postsecondary schools over any material that they find personally objectionable. This will work to limit freedom of thought and expression in all schools.

A population that does not study history will repeat history’s mistakes.

I urge you to not forward SB 196 for further consideration and if it is forwarded, please vote against it.

Steve McGroarty
Ester, Alaska

My name is Kayla Harmon. I was born and raised in Juneau, Alaska where I still reside. I have been an elementary school teacher for the past decade. SB 196 is an awful piece of legislation intended to be divisive and inflammatory. It is intended to strike while the iron is hot with some conservative fantasy that teachers are out to indoctrinate children with wild lifestyles and sin, and it will harm everyone involved. Non-traditional parents will feel alienated, children of same-sex parents will feel alienated, and teachers will feel like there's a target on our back if we say anything remotely kind or inclusive. We must teach children about history, from many perspectives. We must teach children about the bad things that have happened in the past in order to ensure it does not happen again (for example Japanese Internment of **Alaskans** during WWII as part of Executive Order 9066)!

I urge you to squash this bill at its initial steps. It is anti-Alaskan. We are made up of an inclusive and diverse population and we must embrace our differences and not suppress and discriminate any more!

I am writing you from Tilingit Aani- the traditional lands of the Taku Kwaan and Auke Kwaan People. Educate yourself. Think about whose land you are standing on.

Cheers!

Kayla Harmon