



## **Testimony in Support of HB 2428 on DEI-CRT Related Courses by Ian Kingsbury**

### **House Education Committee**

**February 3, 2026**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in strong support of House Bill 2428, a vital piece of legislation that safeguards the integrity of Kansas public universities. HB 2428 directs the Kansas Board of Regents to ensure that no degree program in state-funded institutions requires students to enroll in courses centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives or critical race theory (CRT). This bill is not an attack on education. Rather, it's an effort toward restoration of foundational principles: Fostering knowledge through merit and open dialogue, not compelled dogma.

Indeed, DEI programs are fundamentally anathema to the spirit of meritocracy. Meritocracy, at its heart, is the principle that individuals advance based on their abilities, efforts, and achievements. Yet DEI initiatives invert this ideal by prioritizing group identities over individual merit. Under the guise of equity, these programs often implement preferential treatments and diversity statements that judge people not by the content of their character or the quality of their work, but by immutable traits like race, gender, or ethnicity.

Consider hiring practices in academia: DEI mandates frequently require candidates to submit statements affirming their commitment to these ideologies, effectively screening out those who prioritize merit alone. This creates a chilling effect, where scholars who value objective excellence are sidelined in favor of those who align with a prescribed worldview. The result? A dilution of standards. When admissions, promotions, or funding decisions hinge on identity metrics rather than proven competence, we erode the very foundation of trust in our institutions. Meritocracy thrives on competition and accountability. Tragically, DEI replaces it with engineered outcomes, fostering resentment and mediocrity. As evidenced in numerous campuses across the nation, where DEI bureaucracies balloon while academic rigor suffers, this approach stifles the pursuit of truth. HB 2428 counters this by preventing mandatory indoctrination, allowing students to choose courses based on intellectual interest, not ideological conformity.

Equally concerning is how DEI undermines open inquiry—the lifeblood of higher education. Universities should be arenas for robust debate, where ideas are tested through evidence and reason. Open inquiry demands that all perspectives, even unpopular ones, be aired and challenged without fear of reprisal. However, DEI frameworks often impose a monolithic lens, labeling dissenting views as "oppressive" or even "violent." This leads to self-censorship, canceled lectures, and punitive measures against those who question the orthodoxy.

For instance, professors who argue that socioeconomic factors, rather than systemic racism alone, explain disparities may find themselves accused of insensitivity, facing investigations or ostracism. Such environments prioritize emotional safety over intellectual growth, turning classrooms into echo chambers. True open inquiry embraces discomfort as a pathway to discovery. HB 2428 restores balance by ensuring that no student is forced into courses that promote this one-sided narrative.

Now, let us turn to critical theory, including critical race theory, and its departure from rigorous academic inquiry. Rigorous inquiry is grounded in empiricism, falsifiability, and the scientific method. It admits uncertainty and evolves with evidence. Critical theory, however, operates as a totalizing ideology, viewing the world through power dynamics and oppression narratives that are often unfalsifiable. It posits that society is inherently structured by invisible forces of domination, where objectivity itself is dismissed as a tool of the powerful.

This is not scholarship; it is activism masquerading as academia. Critical theorists assert as axiomatic truth that racism is embedded in every institution. CRT departs from academia by rejecting universal standards, instead advocating for "standpoint epistemology," where knowledge is valid only if it aligns with marginalized perspectives.

In practice, this leads to distorted curricula: history courses that emphasize grievance over facts, literature classes that reduce texts to power critiques, and social sciences that abandon quantitative methods for narrative advocacy. The consequence? Graduates ill-equipped for real-world challenges, armed with ideology rather than critical thinking skills. HB 2428 addresses this by mandating that universities designate and scrutinize such courses, preventing them from being prerequisites for degrees.

Critics may claim that HB 2428 stifles diversity of thought, but the opposite is true. By removing compulsory DEI and CRT elements, it liberates students and faculty to explore ideas freely. Our universities must produce thinkers, innovators, and leaders who excel through merit rather than compelled orthodoxies.

In conclusion, HB 2428 ensures that taxpayer dollars fund education, not indoctrination. I urge this body to pass this bill swiftly. Let us build a future where excellence prevails, ideas flourish, and truth is sought without fear. Thank you.