



PO Box 654
Lawrence, KS 66044

KansasInterfaithAction.org
KIFA@kansasinterfaithaction.org

Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director
Rev. Dr. Annie Ricker, Board Chair

Testimony by Rabbi Moti Rieber in Opposition to HB 2428 — Requiring the state board of regents to establish curricula and designate courses at postsecondary educational institutions relating to DEI-CRT-related courses and content and requiring the study of American institutions and certain programs at freshman orientations concerning free speech.

House Education Committee, Rep. Susan Estes, Chair - Feb. 3, 2026

Mme. Chair, Members of the Committee:

My name is Rabbi Moti Rieber and I serve as Executive Director for Kansas Interfaith Action, an multifaith advocacy group that works for justice and equality for all people across the state of Kansas. I rise today in opposition to HB 2428.

For years we have been concerned about the suppression of ideas of racial and gender diversity under the guise of opposition to DEI or CRT. We have opposed these efforts because we believe in the student's right to learn, and not to have their education prescribed for them by ideologically motivated legislators or malign national actors like ALEC or the Heritage Foundation, the generators of this cookie-cutter bill.

A student attending a post-secondary educational institution in Kansas should be expected to be introduced to concepts that they or their parents might not be comfortable with. But that doesn't mean these ideas don't have value. The very concepts enumerated in this bill, including systemic racism, social justice, implicit bias, and race-based or gender-based diversity, are in fact important concepts for any culturally aware person to understand. I happen to think these concepts accurately describe the forces at work in this country, both historically and currently, but even if you don't, the answer this is further discussion and exploration and not the suppression or exemption from these ideas or concepts, especially in college, where discussing and debating difficult and complicated subjects is part of the the point.

The targeting of DEI and CRT in this legislation is part of the rollback of the halting and partial progress against racial and gender discrimination that we're seeing in the country. The fact that we might be uncomfortable with certain aspects of American history and culture should not serve as an excuse for suppressing discussion of them. We have seen many occasions where specious accusations of DEI or CRT have been used to take important literature and history out of libraries and curricula, including books by Toni Morrison and James Baldwin and even Anne Frank. This legislation opens to more of this by allowing the claim that such an author is on the curriculum simply because of their racial or gender identity and not because of the value of their ideas. In cases like this, the accusation seems to be enough.

It's especially ironic that this bill includes teaching the "importance of free speech and viewpoint diversity" because it represents a direct attack on those very things. "Free speech for me and not for thee" seems to be the order of the day.

Suppressing ideas with a wave of the hand under a poorly understood and politically vilified concept of DEI or CRT is censorship, plain and simple, and serves only the purpose of promoting the idea that only the voices of the majority in this country are worth hearing. That is a direct attack on the goal of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic America that we at KIFA should be striving for. I urge you to vote no on HB 2428.