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HB2428 – Requiring the state board of regents to establish curricula and designate courses at postsecondary educational institutions relating to DEI-CRT-related courses
Opponent Testimony, Written

Tuesday, Feb 3, 2026, 1:30 PM
House Committee on Education
Rep. Susan Estes, Chair

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on HB2428.

Mainstream was founded over 30 years ago by faith and community leaders who warned about the intrusion of narrow, extremist religious views into our government and public institutions. In the following decades, Mainstream members have fought to protect our religious freedoms and maintain strong church-state separation because Kansans value their freedom to live as they see fit without the overreach of government or religion into their personal lives.

Mainstream OPPOSES HB2428 as a partisan over-reach of government into the classrooms of our public colleges and universities.

Our institutions of higher learning are a place where students of all ages, backgrounds, race, sexualities, and political leanings can come together to learn from experts in their field of study. For many young adults, college campuses are the first place where they experience different view points than what they encountered in their home communities. These places are beautiful examples of the dream of our ancestors where everyone can come together to exchange ideas that grow and strengthen our country.

HB2428 will deny students this opportunity and instead impose an extremist agenda encouraged by a national dialogue that demonizes colleges and universities. What is defined as “DEI-CRT related content” is our country’s history, including both the goods and evils of our collective past. College courses teach students to be critical thinkers and evaluate who they are, their relationships to others in society, and how our institutions and systems both support and limit our individual ambitions.

Americans are not a monolith. We are black, brown, white, gay, straight, bisexual, transgender, male, female, young, old, rich, poor, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, secular, of different abilities, with

different political affiliation, and so much more. To slap a simple label of DEI onto the study of our unique differences is to deny the value of our existence.

Many fields of study, such as medicine and psychology, require a unique understanding of human differences and history to reduce health disparities. Denying whole departments from requiring courses that address these issues will stall progress in fields. As legislators, you are not the experts in what content is required to achieve a degree that qualifies someone to practice their profession. These decisions need to be left up to those who understand the future of their field and what students need to be successful. HB 2428 unnecessarily hinders professionals from supporting the next generation of doctors, entrepreneurs, artists, teachers, and more.

In addition to restricting what is required in academic departments, Sec 2 of HB2428 advances this legislature's preferred syllabus on American constitutional democracy. Again, this is an overreach of the responsibility of elected officials into the content of public higher education.

At Mainstream we support efforts to increase civic engagement through education. We agree that students should have a basic understanding of our founding documents, institutions, and laws. But to understand these, students need to be free to critically examine how they interact with concepts defined as "DEI-CRT." Students deserve opportunities to read texts in the historical context of race, gender, and other diversity, or else we are doomed to perpetuate the mistakes of our past. To deny students the opportunity to learn about anything other than the history approved by those with political power is to deny the very American experiment of individual liberty, self-governance, and inalienable rights.

Finally, HB2428 elevates the narrative that our public colleges and universities are not to be trusted. "Each institution shall make available on its website, to the maximum extent allowed by law, a copy of or link to any audio or video materials, printed materials or presentation slides distributed or presented to students as part of the freshman orientation programming related to diversity, equity and inclusion and gender identity or any DEI-CRT-related content." We should be careful participants in what and how our students learn, but freshmen entering into colleges and universities are often young adults who have chosen to enroll in their specific school, not young minors subject to parental control. Requiring materials to be posted publicly under the controversial label of "DEI-CRT" is an open invitation for the public to launch partisan attacks on college and university administrations.

In summary, HB2428 is an overreach of this legislature into the curriculum of public colleges and universities, mandates learning through a partisan lens of American history, and opens our institutes of higher education to public attacks. This bill is in response to national partisan narratives that paint our colleges and universities as the enemy, not as the places of learning and growth they are intended to be.

For these reasons, Mainstream opposes HB2428 and we urge this committee to vote no on this clear overreach of the government.

Thank you,

Laurel Burchfield, Mainstream Coalition