

March 14, 2017

Dear Honorable Chair Roblan and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Aaron Sha, and I am a highschool junior at Jesuit High School. I understand passing this bill would not help my specific private institution, but I would love to help make history for the public schools in Oregon.

In the entire lifespan of our universe, there has been no greater story than the History of the Human Race. We learn from this story, we can laugh about it, we can have conversations about it, but most of all, we take pride in it. America prides itself for being a heroic country, charging into battle in countries like Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan, in order to be the knight in shining armor. Although we can promote America's history, minorities often see this and feel excluded. We ask, "where are we in all of this heroism? Are we not present at all?" Especially for younger students, if they are not taught about their culture and heritage in school, they will have a hard time learning about it at their busy homes.

From grades 1-8, before I transitioned to a private school curriculum, I underwent the public school history curriculum. I did learn a lot. I learned about how British settlers established colonies, how the Corps of Discovery mapped the road to the Pacific, and how America became the most powerful nation following World War II. I came to respect western culture for its successes. However, the only time the Asian race was mentioned was during a very brief time discussing immigrants in the 19th century. Learning of this and nothing else about our history makes me feel like just that, foreigners in the land we now call our home.

In the modern era we live in, minorities have had their pride and culture taken away from them. An inclusive history curriculum, which Senate Bill 280 endeavors to accomplish, will provide people of minorities knowledge about their own culture, and "knowledge is power." We will be able to stand up for who we are, reaching closer to a society with racial equality. My hope is for my 11 year old sister to grow up with a diverse and empowering history curriculum so she can be proud of who she was born as.

Thank you so so much for your time, honorable chairmen and women.

- Aaron Sha