

SB 683, Mandating Schools to Teach about Racism in America and Oregon.  
Testimony opposing.

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

I strongly urge you to oppose SB 683 for the following five reasons:

1. It appears to be similar to the now widely debunked *1619 Project*, which has been shown to be historically inaccurate and biased.
2. This bill degrades and disrespects the black community because it implies that black people are incapable of functioning well because of white racism, perpetuating the myth of black helplessness, inferiority, and dependency on white actions. Robert Woodson, black civil rights and community development leader and founder and president of the Woodson Center, refutes the myth of black helplessness: “Even in the era of legislated segregation and discrimination before the civil-rights movement, blacks tapped an entrepreneurial legacy to launch thriving enterprises, including hotels, banks, hospitals, dental schools, insurance companies and even a dry dock and railroad company. In fact, the black business district of Durham, N.C., was widely known as ‘Black Wall Street.’ This spectrum of achievement is a powerful refutation of the claim that the destiny of black Americans is determined by what whites do—or what they did in the past” <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-1619-project-hurts-blacks-11567033108>).
3. This bill indoctrinates students and takes precious time away from students to learn critical thinking skills and the kinds of knowledge necessary to flourish in our culture. Black writer and economist, now a fellow at Stanford University, Thomas Sowell said, “If you are serious about mathematics, the English language, science, things like that, you really cannot squander the time of schoolchildren on these other adventures in indoctrination, almost regardless of what the indoctrination is” <https://www.westernjournal.com/legendary-thomas-sowell-warns-country-approaching-point-no-return/>.
4. Oregon students are already learning about slavery and racism. “Current state standards adopted in 2018 include multiple learning targets on slavery, oppression, marginalized people, and civil rights.  
“The Oregon Department of Education’s most recent Social Science Newsletter highlights the plethora of resources available to teachers on these topics, including radical materials from the Southern Poverty Law Center. In Oregon’s K-5 classrooms, social studies curriculum is primarily Native American history and Black history/civil rights. Slavery, oppression and activism are covered extensively in 8th grade and in high school U.S. History/American Studies classes” <https://www.northwestobserver.com/index.php?ArticleId=1043>).
5. This bill would incite further anger, division, and disunity as it focuses primarily on injustices of the past, rather than the great progress that has been made among different ethnicities.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote no on SB 683.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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