

To Whom it May Concern...

My name is Hao Tran. I am seventeen, a first generation, asian immigrant, and I am taking Black Studies at David Douglas High School. I am writing this letter in the effort of explaining why it is important for Oregon students to have the option of attending ethnic studies classes.

Why would an Asian immigrant like me decide to take Black Studies? I was terrified upon my arrival to the U.S. Different groups of people are being portrayed as different things. Dark skin colors are being betrayed as a threat. On multiple occasions, police officers would rather respond to an unarmed black male for trespassing than a white male holding a gun in his hand. On multiple occasions, as I move upward the ladder of education, I encounter fewer students who identify themselves as Black or African American. Black history is only known for its connection with slavery. Black history is only known for the statistics of crime it is responsible for over the years. Building and nurturing itself from prejudice and discrimination, the black body changes over the years. It rises and grows stronger. Every time it's ready to rise itself, it once again gets suppressed. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. never got a chance to lead after his speech. Nobody was talking about Black Lives Matter until the soul of George Floyd had been taken. I was inspired.

I decided to take Black Studies to create a better world, to find better ways to treat one another, and to have a better understanding of the social issues we as a society face in this vulnerable time. In order to do such thing, to end racial discrimination, we have to be comfortable to talk about race. With all honesty, I hope the topic of race is being discussed among lawmakers. However, these laws and policies would not only affect the generations right now but also the generations of the future. Generations of better and inspiring leaders. Generations of hopes. Generations of open-minded individuals. Ethnic studies classes would allow the next generations to do just that. Provide students a safe way to be open-minded to others and talk about their experiences. Give students a place where they can embrace who they are. And, inspire students to take actions for the common goods.

Sincerely,  
Hao Tran