



IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION  
*BUILDING NEW BEGINNINGS*

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MAIN OFFICE

AFRICA HOUSE

EASTERN OREGON

GREATER MIDDLE EAST  
CENTER

PACIFIC ISLANDER &  
ASIAN FAMILY CENTER

SLAVIC AND EASTERN  
EUROPEAN CENTER

March 30th, 2023

Re: SB 1050; Support of Ethnic Studies Implementation

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the committee,

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) would like to show our strong support for SB 1050 which seeks to implement ethnic studies professional development.

For decades, IRCO has supported generations of immigrant and refugee youth through school-based and school-linked academic programming. These programs served nearly 4,400 youth in 2021.

As the implementation of state ethnic studies standards continues, impacting our youth and in-school staff, we would like to reiterate the need for your support of ethnic studies professional development funding and implementation.

While we hope to make strides in workforce development for educators who are Black, Indigenous, people of color, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ2SIA+ folx; it is critical that we invest in our current educator workforce and lead districts forward in teaching ethnic studies curriculum.

The State must mitigate possible harm to Oregon's intersectional student body, many of whom are BIPOC, queer, trans/non-binary, and students with disabilities. Therefore, educators need new lesson plans and instructional materials that are culturally responsive, accessible, and enhance all students' learning.

All teachers must be adequately trained to facilitate difficult conversations and topics.

Additionally, as a refugee resettlement agency and service provider, IRCO supports the timely implementation of standards related to the teaching of Holocaust and genocide curriculum.

It is because of the advocacy of Jewish Americans and Holocaust survivors that the refugee system in the United States was created. The refugee communities we work with have direct experience with persecution and xenophobia, and we honor the histories of all people who have experienced genocide, ethnic cleansing, internment, displacement, civil war, and enslavement. IRCO was founded by such survivors and continues to serve those who seek refuge from such atrocities.

Investing in just and inclusive learning ensures the long-term success of our state. If the state is still invested in just and inclusive learning, an intentional implementation must be considered. Supporting SB1050 ensures those dynamic and informed educators will provide affirming and accessible learning opportunities for our students.

Alexander Riedlinger

Policy Advocacy Coordinator

Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization