

One Spirit in Action Presents

Protecting Inclusive and Honest Education: What's all the fuss about "critical race theory" and why should you care?

Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it.

— George Santayana

In response to local, state, and national efforts to disrupt or block teaching about systemic racism, sexism, and diversity of sexual orientation, One Spirit in Action (OSIA) has developed this informational flyer. Here we summarize the issues, identify action steps that are aligned with One Spirit's commitment to be an anti-racist organization ([Antiracism and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion — 1Spirit | Honor Your Sacred Calling](#)), and provide resources to learn more.

What is the issue?

As of June 2021, 165 groups had formed in the U.S. to disrupt or block teaching about race, gender, and LGBTQ+ content in U.S. public schools, colleges, and universities. The most aggressive of these groups have threatened local school board members and suggested that teachers be forced to wear body cameras to monitor what they are teaching ([Uncovering Who Is Driving The Fight Against Critical Race Theory In Schools : NPR](#)).

From Maine to Idaho, state law makers have passed or are considering legislation to ban curriculum content that explores this nation's history of oppression and continuing inequities that are build-in to our modern-day institutions. Educators' efforts to help their students understand the widespread demonstrations in response to the murder of George Floyd and other killings of people of color by police were label as "teaching critical race theory (CRT)." Conservative groups and law makers exaggerate and misrepresent CRT and now have a boogie man to stoke fear and rally those who would resist the changes required to address systemic inequities ([Why are states banning critical race theory? \(brookings.edu\)](#)). Some state legislation has banned LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum (Oklahoma, Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas).

What is Critical Race Theory (CRT)?

CRT is a theoretical framework that scholars (not K-12 educators) use to analyze and challenge power structures that sustain inequities. Opponents of CRT falsely claim that it attributes racism to white people as individuals or even to entire groups of people. "Simply put, critical race theory states that U.S. social institutions (e.g., the criminal justice system, education system, Protecting Inclusive and Honest Education

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labor market, housing market, and healthcare system) are laced with racism embedded in laws, regulations, rules, and procedures that lead to differential outcomes by race” ([Why are states banning critical race theory? \(brookings.edu\)](#)).

What is at stake?

Creating a just society depends upon candid appraisal of historical and current inequities and willingness to address them. Education that is inclusive (meaning honors all students, their cultures, and communities) and honest about this nation’s past and present is fundamental to preparing us to engage in the changes that are needed to make our ideals of equality, liberty, and justice for all a reality. Learning about the injustices of the past may be unsettling but it need not be divisive. As Maya Angelou has said, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” Unless we engage in honest and inclusive education, we and our children cannot know better or do better.

What can you do?

1. Educate yourself about the issues (see resource links below)
2. Learn more about your local and state efforts to support inclusive curriculum. What is being done? Who supports these efforts?
3. Learn more about efforts to ban curriculum that explores race, gender, and LGBTQ+ inclusion in your local school district and state. Who supports these efforts?
4. Vote for candidates who support inclusive education. Vote against candidate who do not.
5. Contact your local school board members, local officials, and legislators and tell them you support inclusive curriculum.

Resources for Understanding the Critical Race Theory Issue

[What Is Critical Race Theory? - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

[Critical race theory - Wikipedia](#)

[Creator Of Term ‘Critical Race Theory’ Kimberlé Crenshaw Explains What It Really Is - YouTube](#) (MSNBC 9 minutes)

[WATCH: What is critical race theory? - YouTube](#) (PB2 News Hour 2.5 minutes)

[WATCH: Answering your questions on critical race theory - YouTube](#) (PBS New Hour 31 minutes)

WATCH: [Why Americans are so divided over teaching critical race theory - YouTube](#) (PBS News Hour 9 minutes)

[Activist Christopher Rufo fuels GOP’s critical race theory fight - The Washington Post](#)

[Why are states banning critical race theory? \(brookings.edu\)](#)

[Uncovering Who Is Driving The Fight Against Critical Race Theory In Schools : NPR](#)