

Fundamental Rights of Parents Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory – also known as CRT, has been around for over 4 decades. CRT’s foundation was inspired by the philosophical writings of legal scholars, Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado. However, Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, a law professor at the U.C.L.A. School of Law and Columbia Law School, was the first person widely credited with coining the term. CRT’s original intent was to train law students how to interpret the law through a racial lens. Its purpose was to illustrate racial disparities under the law – systemic racism. So, how did Critical Race Theory slip into our K-12 school system? Why has the term been so prevalent the last few years? How is it being presented in schools? Should parents be concerned? How is it affecting our children? And why are some states outlawing CRT? These are just a few of the questions that parents have come to ask.

First thing to note about Critical Race Theory is that you won’t find it as its own curriculum. But rather, a practice that is embedded into other subjects or given a different name. For example, California passed a bill known as AB 2016 in 2016, which requires teaching of Ethnic Studies in each school district including charter schools. On April 1, 2022, the State Board of Education will adopt an additional Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. According to Manuel Rustin, who is part of the committee that oversaw the drafting of the model curriculum stated, “Ethnic studies without critical race theory is not ethnic studies. It would be like a science class without the scientific method then. There is no critical analysis of systems of power and experiences of these marginalized groups without critical race theory.” When reviewing the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum from the California Department of Education – it outlines the importance on teaching about institutionalized systems of advantage, anti-blackness, anti-Indigeneity, antisemitism, Islamophobia within our culture and governmental policies. It also calls to focus on the clarification of the role that race and ethnicity play both in California and the United States. Proponents of the module believe that given the events which transpired over the last two years, from Capitol Hill, policy brutality, to hate crimes, are all more of a reason to focus on the dynamics of racism. Districts such as the Los Angeles Unified School District and Fresno Unified School District will adopt ethnic study courses as a requirement to graduate High School.

While there are many proponents for the curriculum, you also have those who differ in view. States such as Idaho, Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Oklahoma have banned teachings related to CRT. Why? Because they find these teachings to be racist at its core. The focus on one race being superior to others, the idea that all white Americans are racist and the segregation of races into oppressor’s vs oppressed, is not something they want to imbed in the minds of children. Parents in the Antelope Valley have already begun to see the influence of CRT being adopted into their children’s curriculum. A parent who wishes to remain anonymous, expressed concerns regarding a biography her daughter, who is in Kindergarten, was asked to view. In this biography of Martin Luther King Jr, the video accurately described the persecution happening during that period. However, it emphasized the color of skin of the oppressor more than the persecution itself. The video depicted all white men as evil and

hateful. The parent goes on to say that although she never wants to negate the fact that evil and hate exist, the label towards one race was not only bias, but racist in of itself. The mother, although saddened, was glad she watched the video with her daughter because it allowed for a teaching moment. It allowed for the mother to explain that hate isn't subject to skin color, but rather a matter of the heart.

As mentioned in a previous article, children are malleable. If they are being immersed with bias information on a day-to-day basis, it doesn't allow for them to think freely or objectively. This now begs the question for those that oppose CRT. Why not put more emphasis on the heart of the matter – hate and evil, rather than the race of the individual. If hate and evil can be tackled head on for what they are, then root issues can be addressed effectively. While the teaching of history, systems, government, and institutions are crucial and fundamental to the growth of this country, it must be done in a way that portrays all humans as equally subjectable. We must allow for individuals to think freely and come up with their own conclusions. Parents, have every right to know what and how their children are being taught so they may counter or add on to those lessons. Till next time... Denize Verduzco