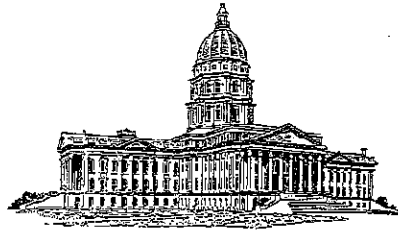


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JOHN ALCALA
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Good Afternoon

Thank you Chairman Highland and Committee for this Education hearing on HB 2207 which will allow in Kansas schools grades 7-12, the teaching of Ethnic Studies.

The importance of HB2207 can be explained in the following points:

- Our commitment as lawmakers to Kansas and the multitude of public school students is one I know we all take seriously. Our responsibility to the students of Kansas is to ready them for a rapidly changing, diverse and globally interconnected world. The teaching of Ethnic Studies can help achieve student readiness by exploration of different races and cultures that helped build our United States.
- A number of studies have referenced teaching Ethnic Studies as a way of reducing achievement gaps students of color to this day struggle with. After FIFTEEN YEARS of running after school programming, I have seen up close their educational struggles. Studying their particular race/ethnicity in an academic setting, and witnessing stories like their own as vital in molding our countries narrative have been shown to increase self esteem and test

scores. Yet Ethnic Studies has impacted and readied students of European ancestry - by introducing them to differing perspectives than those taught in traditional social studies and history classes. Ethnic studies can build bridges and create understanding to ALL involved since Ethnic Studies courses utilize critical and analytic skills.

- And finally – this is Kansas. Ethnic Studies as a requirement fits just fine in a State that paved the way for an end to brutal desegregation and is now the home of Brown v. Board. We are a State built on the abolitionist beliefs of a larger than life figure we view every day in our capitol – John Brown. Also how many incredible sculptures of Native American people do we see across Kansas? One of the most striking – keeps watch at the top of our State Capitol. Our wonderful state has named many a county, town, and city in memory of Native American tribes located to Kansas. With Ethnic Studies ALL students will have the chance to learn about vital and valued parts of our national and state history.