



**KANSAS CITY FEDERATION
OF TEACHERS & SCHOOL
RELATED PERSONNEL
LOCAL 691, AFL-CIO**

300 E 39th St, #1J
Kansas City, MO 64111
(816)756-1818 – aft691@aft691.org

Honorable Legislative Representatives,

I want to thank you first and foremost for your service to our state. Representing a diverse group of people with diverse opinions, ideas, perspective, and values is never an easy task. As an elected representative of the Kansas City teachers, I share a great understanding of the challenges you face in representation. We undoubtedly live in divisive and contentious times both in our state and in our country. We must do everything possible to unite citizens across our state of various backgrounds, religions, orientations, and perspectives.

I am writing to address concerns about possible legislation dealing with critical race theory and the 1619 project. We must be clear that critical race theory is not being taught in our K-12 schools in the state of Missouri. The overall concept of critical race theory is a collegiate level course taught at some universities which are vocal about their liberal bent. These collegiate conceptual ideologies are not part of the Missouri curriculum or standards as set forth by the Missouri Department of Education.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education publishes a list of standards which must be taught and mastered from the kindergarten to 12th grade level. It is then up to each individual district using local control to decide the curriculum taught to meet those standards. The Missouri Department of Education does not in any way, shape, or form dictate the curriculum taught in a particular school district. This is always important to remember as local control is a central tenet of the educational process in the state of Missouri. Additionally local control has been a central theme of The Honorable Governor Mike Parsons. Any pending legislation to be passed under this honorable body would certainly open the door to the removal of local control of curriculum and hand it over to the state. I think we all understand that an additional level of bureaucracy in the educational system is unnecessary.

As educated people we must also always remember that each side has their own story. As an educator of history I am fully aware that history is always written from the perspective of the victorious. We are familiar with the phrase “to the victor goes the spoils”. This certainly does not mean that we do not want to educate and encourage students to look at the side that lost or was conquered. For certainly their perspective is important as well. Therefore, I encourage an educational system in the state of Missouri which allows students to look at both sides of complex and difficult issues and reach their own conclusions. This should include the teaching of hard, difficult, complex topics dealing with our past and are not so distant histories.

The hallmark of a truly democratic society is an educated populace. Good well-rounded education means both sides have an opportunity to speak and to be heard. This is the hallmark of the foundation of our country and of our electoral process. It should also be a hallmark of our educational system. Let me be clear I do not support any educational process or facility that forces students to hear only one side of complex issues. Additionally, I do not support any educational process or facility that tells students how to think. Along the same lines I do not support any educational process or facility which pits one group against another. To strengthen the educational bonds which tie our citizens together we certainly must teach honest education. No student should leave the classroom or the educational facility feeling as if they have been targeted, demeaned, belittled, or made to feel less than another. However, we must not tie the hands of our educational staff and facilities and thus risk of the loss of local control.



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Therefore, I ask this legislative body to drop the consideration of possible impending legislation concerning the teaching of collegiate conceptual ideas of critical race theory and allow local control to remain local control. Threatening educational staff with harsh punishments including termination for mere allegations as has happened in some states will only lead to a further decline of teachers in the state of Missouri. The educational shortage in our state is a serious concern for all local school districts who cannot fill classrooms. This legislation will not have a positive effect on the teacher shortage in our state.

I ask this honorable legislative body to consider laws and legislative policies which will unite the citizens of Missouri from north, south, east, and west and not cause further division on issues that do not exist in our schools.

Yours in Service and Support,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason M. Roberts". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning of the first name.

Jason M. Roberts
President of KCFT&SRP 691