

NASW-MS Chapter Opposes SB 2113

The Mississippi Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-MS), Social Justice committee strongly opposes Senate Bill 2113 (2022 session), titled “Critical Race Theory; prohibit.” As an organization committed to advancing cultural understanding, we acknowledge the inherent strengths of each unique cultural group and work to combat all forms of oppression and discrimination. We recognize that privilege exists in multiple forms and has historically benefitted groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status.

While the proposed legislation claims to prohibit the teaching of Critical Race Theory, the tenets identified in the bill “(a) that any sex, race, ethnicity, religion or national origin is inherently superior or inferior; or (b) that individuals should be adversely treated on the basis of their sex, race, ethnicity, religion or national origin” (SB 2113) are not in fact tenets of Critical Race Theory.

The central tenets of critical race theory are, rather:

- Race is a social construct. Grouping people into categories based upon the color of their skin is a social distinction created to segregate individuals and give social, political, and economic meaning attached to that identity.
- Racism has existed and still exists within our country’s policies, laws, and government services. Evidence of this can be seen in our judicial system (sentencing laws), healthcare (healthcare disparities), housing and job opportunities, and education.
- The best way to decrease inequality is to listen to the lived experiences of those who have experienced racism.

The proposed legislation clearly does not correctly recognize Critical Race Theory. Moreover, it perniciously cripples the capacity of educators to select curricular materials best suited to cultivating students’ critical thinking, self-awareness, and civic consciousness. The *de facto* censoring of instructors through threats of public education funding cuts creates an environment in which the thoughtful treatment of essential topics related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion are likely to be avoided for fear of sanctions – constituting a grave injury to the well-being of the entire state.

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