

**House Study Bill 53 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE \_\_\_\_\_  
BY (PROPOSED COMMITTEE ON HIGHER  
EDUCATION BILL BY CHAIRPERSON  
COLLINS)

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act prohibiting certain requirements for students and  
2 faculty at regents institutions relating to diversity,  
3 equity, inclusion, and critical race theory and including  
4 applicability provisions.  
5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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1 Section 1. SHORT TITLE. This Act shall be known and may be  
2 cited as the "Freedom from Indoctrination Act".

3 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. **261K.1 Definitions.**

4 For purposes of this chapter, unless the context otherwise  
5 requires:

6 1. "Board" means the state board of regents.

7 2. "Constrain" means failure by a public institution of  
8 higher education during any semester to provide a sufficient  
9 number of open seats in alternative courses for a student to  
10 complete or progress toward completion of degree or program  
11 requirements.

12 3. "Diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical race  
13 theory-related content" means content that does one or more of  
14 the following:

15 a. Relates any of the following topics to contemporary  
16 American society: critical theory, systemic racism,  
17 institutional racism, anti-racism, microaggressions, systemic  
18 bias, implicit bias, unconscious bias, intersectionality, social  
19 justice, cultural competence, allyship, race-based reparations,  
20 race-based privilege, race or gender-based diversity, race or  
21 gender-based equity, or race or gender-based inclusion.

22 b. Promotes the idea that racially neutral or colorblind  
23 laws, policies, or institutions perpetuate oppression; injustice;  
24 race-based privilege, including white supremacy or white  
25 privilege; or inequity by failing to actively differentiate on  
26 the basis of race, sex, or gender.

27 c. Promotes the differential treatment of any individual or  
28 groups of individuals based on race or ethnicity in contemporary  
29 American society.

30 d. Promotes the idea that a student is biased on account of  
31 the student's race or sex.

32 4. "Diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical race  
33 theory-related course" means any course for which the course  
34 description, course overview, course objectives, proposed student  
35 learning outcomes, written examinations, or written or oral

1 assignments for which the student will receive a grade, includes  
2 diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical race theory-related  
3 content.

4 5. *"Diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical race theory*  
5 *practices"* means any requirement or guidance that a course  
6 instructor include or curate materials on the basis of the race,  
7 sex, or gender identity of an author or authors. *"Diversity,*  
8 *equity, inclusion, and critical race theory practices"* also  
9 means participating in any workshop, training, seminar, or  
10 professional development on any diversity, equity, inclusion,  
11 and critical race theory-related content. *"Diversity, equity,*  
12 *inclusion, and critical race theory practices"* does not include  
13 any programming explicitly required by the public institution  
14 of higher education's legal obligations to comply with Tit. IX  
15 of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, the Americans  
16 with Disabilities Act, as amended, the Age Discrimination in  
17 Employment Act, as amended, Tit. VI of the Civil Rights Act of  
18 1964, or an applicable court order.

19 6. *"Public institution of higher education"* means an  
20 institution of higher learning governed by the board.

21 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. **261K.2 Limitation on academic**  
22 **requirements.**

23 The board shall establish a policy that ensures that public  
24 institutions of higher education do not require or constrain  
25 students to enroll in a diversity, equity, inclusion, and  
26 critical race theory-related course in order to satisfy the  
27 requirements of any academic degree program, including general  
28 education, major, minor, or certificate requirements, except as  
29 provided in section 261K.4.

30 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. **261K.3 Limitation on faculty**  
31 **requirements.**

32 A public institution of higher education, or any employee,  
33 appointee, or committee acting on its behalf, shall not require,  
34 solicit, or incentivize faculty of the institution to apply or  
35 participate in diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical race

1 theory practices or include diversity, equity, inclusion, and  
2 critical race theory-related content in any course as a condition  
3 of approval, designation, or listing as part of any academic  
4 degree program, including general education; major, minor, or  
5 certificate requirements; or as a condition of consideration in  
6 any faculty member's performance assessment, promotion, tenure,  
7 salary adjustment, or any other incentive, except as provided in  
8 section 261K.4.

9       Sec. 5. NEW SECTION.   **261K.4 Exemptions.**

10       The board may grant an exemption from the requirements of  
11 sections 261K.2 and 261K.3 for the academic degree program  
12 requirements of any major, minor, certificate, or academic unit  
13 if the title thereof clearly establishes its course of study  
14 as primarily focused on racial, ethnic, or gender studies.  
15 However, a student shall not be required or constrained to  
16 enroll in any such program or course in order to satisfy the  
17 requirements of any other academic degree program, including  
18 general education requirements, or any other major, minor, or  
19 certificate requirements.

20       Sec. 6. NEW SECTION.   **261K.5 Enforcement.**

21       Any person may notify the attorney general of a potential  
22 violation of this chapter by a public institution of higher  
23 education. The attorney general may bring an action against a  
24 public institution of higher education for a writ of mandamus to  
25 compel the institution, or any employee, appointee, or committee  
26 acting on its behalf, to comply with this chapter.

27       Sec. 7. NEW SECTION.   **261K.6 Construction.**

28       This chapter shall not be construed to limit the academic  
29 freedom of any individual course instructor to direct the  
30 instruction within the instructor's own course or to limit the  
31 free discussion of ideas in a classroom setting.

32       Sec. 8. APPLICABILITY. This Act applies to academic years at  
33 public institutions of higher education, as defined in section  
34 261K.1, as enacted by this Act, beginning on or after July 1,  
35 2026.

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EXPLANATION

The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

This bill prohibits certain requirements for students and faculty at regents institutions relating to diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical race theory.

The bill requires the state board of regents to establish a policy that ensures that regents institutions do not require or constrain students to enroll in a diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical race theory-related course, as defined in the bill, in order to satisfy the requirements of any academic degree program, including general education, major, minor, or certificate requirements.

The bill provides that a regents institution or any employee, appointee, or committee acting on its behalf, shall not require, solicit, or incentivize faculty of the institution to apply or participate in diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical race theory practices or include diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical race theory-related content, as defined in the bill, in any course as a condition of approval, designation, or listing as part of any academic degree program, including general education; major, minor, or certificate requirements; or as a condition of consideration in any faculty member's performance assessment, promotion, tenure, salary adjustment, or any other incentive.

The bill authorizes the board to grant an exemption from these provisions for the academic degree program requirements of any major, minor, certificate, or academic unit if the title thereof clearly establishes its course of study as primarily focused on racial, ethnic, or gender studies. However, a student shall not be required or constrained to enroll in any such program or course in order to satisfy the requirements of any other academic degree program, including general education requirements, or any other major, minor, or certificate requirements.

The bill authorizes any person to notify the attorney general of a potential violation of the requirements of the bill by a

1 regents institution. The attorney general may bring an action  
2 against a regents institution for a writ of mandamus to compel  
3 the institution, or any employee, appointee, or committee acting  
4 on its behalf, to comply with the requirements of the bill.

5 The bill shall not be construed to limit the academic freedom  
6 of any individual course instructor to direct the instruction  
7 within the instructor's own course or to limit the free  
8 discussion of ideas in a classroom setting.

9 The bill applies to academic years at public institutions of  
10 higher education beginning on or after July 1, 2026.

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