



Allow Texas Students to Take in More Information, Not Less

IDRA Testimony Against SB 3, presented by Araceli García, to the Senate State Affairs Committee, July 15, 2021

My name is Araceli García, my pronouns are she/ella, and I am testifying against SB 3.

For me, and many others here today, it is clear that SB 3 is a thinly veiled attempt to keep Texas students ignorant, because uneducated people are easier to control. For a party that claims to fight for liberty and freedom, all I see in this bill are limitations, restrictions and prohibitions.

It is one thing to say something cannot be required, but it's another to ban ideas from the classroom altogether, which is exactly what SB 3 aims to do. By limiting what kinds of conversations and topics can be discussed in classrooms, we are robbing students of critical learning opportunities, as countless teachers have testified here today.

While the SBOE has testified that "only a few" of the topics that SB 3 strikes through are not already in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), one of the most glaring gaps is Native American history, and how Native people continue to face systemic racism and colonial violence today. There is also nothing required by the TEKS regarding teaching students about the Chicano movement, which has been critical to the formation of many Texans identities, including my own.

Finally, the idea of meritocracy comes up in this bill. The idea that if one simply works hard enough, they will be able to pick themselves up by their bootstraps. Well, I have seen my parents and many in my community work harder than many of you in this room ever have or ever will. So why didn't meritocracy and a "hard work ethic" work for them like it did for y'all? The fact is that there are systemic factors in place that work against their ability to reach the so-called American Dream that don't work against some of you because of our race and socioeconomic status.

Students must be able to learn about how the racism has permeated all of our institutions, and thus that violence continues.

So, my plea to you is that you allow Texas students to take in more information to make their decisions and form their own beliefs, not less.

IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization led by Celina Moreno, J.D. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.