

**SUBJECT:** Adding ethnic studies instruction for credit in public high schools

**COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 12 ayes — Dutton, Allen, Allison, K. Bell, Bernal, Buckley, M. González, Huberty, K. King, Meza, Talarico, VanDeaver

0 nays

1 absent — Lozano

**WITNESSES:** For — Vanessa Beltran, Girls Empowerment Network; Tony Diaz, Librotraficante; Maria Unda, Texas Center for Education Policy; Ronald Castro; Alexzandra Roman; Lucero Saldaña; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Daniela Rubio, Austin Achieve PS; Sarah Miller-Fellows, Girls Empowerment Network; Chloe Latham Sikes, IDRA (Intercultural Development Research Association); Addie Gomez, KIPP Texas; Fatima Menendez, MALDEF; Alison Mohr Boleware, National Association of Social Workers-Texas Chapter; Hillary Lilly, San Antonio ISD; Grover Campbell, TASB; Josette Saxton, Texans Care for Children; Dena Donaldson, Texas AFT; Robert Flores, Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Ana Ramon, Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition; Delia Perez Meyer, Texas Moratorium Network; Jonathan Feinstein, The Education Trust in Texas; Christel Erickson-Collins, Undoing Racism Round Rock; Angeles Desantos; Annemarie Donnelly; Linda Litzinger; Thomas Parkinson)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Starlee Coleman, Texas Public Charter School Association; Karen Marshall)

On — Angela Valenzuela, Texas Center for Education Policy at UT; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Eric Marin and Monica Martinez, Texas Education Agency)

**BACKGROUND:** Education Code sec. 28.002(a) requires each school district that offers

kindergarten through grade 12 shall to offer, as a required curriculum, a foundation curriculum that includes:

- English language arts;
- mathematics;
- science; and
- social studies, consisting of Texas, United States, and world history, government, economics, with emphasis on the free enterprise system and its benefits, and geography.

Interested parties have noted that while Mexican American studies and African American studies courses are offered as elective classes to high school students, they do not fulfill certain graduation requirements. Some have called for allowing Mexican American and African American studies to count toward high school graduation requirements to encourage school districts to invest in resources to teach these classes and encourage more students to participate.

**DIGEST:**

CSHB 1504 would require each public school district that offers kindergarten through grade 12 to offer ethnic studies, including Mexican American and African American studies, as a component of the foundation curriculum in social studies.

The bill would add to curriculum requirements for the foundation high school program one credit in ethnic studies, including Mexican American studies and African American studies, along with world geography or world history, that could fulfill one of three required credits in social studies.

The bill would apply only to students entering the 9th grade during the 2022-2023 school year or a later school year.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.