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House Bill 7082

The education system is greatly hindering and doing our children an immense disservice by excluding African American history from the curriculum. United States history is taught in school, but black history IS United States history. Why is it that the only vision children are shown in regards to African Americans is slavery? Why are only Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks highlighted? The contributions and milestones of African Americans should not be overlooked or condensed to a few selected individuals and moments in history.

Racism is still very much alive and well in our society and it seems to be highlighted with the current events that are happening in the world. During these times, children do not have information to counteract or contrast these views. It is essential to see that we have overcome a multitude of obstacles that have been strategically placed in our way but our perseverance has not wavered. It is important to see that although we have come a long way, we still have a long way to go.

The teaching of black history does not stay contained to school, but transcends to home life as well. If children are taught these lessons in school, it will assist in having these conversations at home. Unfortunately, the "race" talk is something that must happen in the African American household. These conversations allow the connection to be placed between education/school and home/life. By exhibiting positive influences that have been made in history, it will help children to see the current contributions that African Americans still make daily in the world.

We are living in a society that is heavily influenced by television, social media and technology. Due to this, children are exposed to an increased amount of representations. African Americans are generally depicted stereotypically, with a large majority being negative. We see a large population of gangs, violence, single parent households, absent fathers, inmates and the list goes on that promote negative connotations. The large percentages of positive images are based around sports, such as basketball and football players. But we are much more than this. We have made greater contributions and still have more to make. If children focus solely on these views, they will have a deeply skewed view of African Americans. These views can impact interactions and treatments of blacks both inside and outside school.

The addition of black history to school curriculums is not only a positive inclusion for African American children, but rather for all ethnicities and backgrounds. This change will help to counteract the effect of ethnocentrism that may be present, while also encouraging conversations and various viewpoints. Cultural appreciation is important for everybody. By depicting positive views, this will discourage other ethnicities from viewing African Americans as a population to be feared or avoided. Teaching black history and forming associations to present day helps to combat xenophobia, while encouraging a positive environment that promotes inclusivity, respect and appreciation.