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National Association for Multicultural Education

In the weeks before state legislatures get back in session, many lawmakers have crafted bills to make discussions about racism, sexism, justice and equality in schools and colleges illegal for educators. Indeed, [as some states try to ban ideas such as social emotional learning, structural racism, equity, multiculturalism and social justice, the National Association for Multicultural Education \(NAME\) recognizes such efforts as intentional](#) white supremacy.

Education Week in a Dec. 7, 2021, article headlined, [“Map: Where Critical Race Theory Is Under Attack,”](#) said that as of Nov. 24, “29 states have introduced bills or taken other steps that would restrict teaching critical race theory or limit how teachers can discuss racism and sexism.” The bans have been put in place by 12 states either through legislation or other means. Critical race theory, also known as CRT, is an [academic term dating to the 1970s and 1980s](#) that examines government, legal systems, society, housing, history and institutions of power through the lens of race. CRT in education outlines the history of racism and white supremacy and clarifies how racism is structured across US institutions, [arguing that to address racism, schools must, among other strategies, serve to strengthen the voices of children of color.](#) Such a perspective offers structural ways to address such racism, moving from individual bias to dismantle entrenched white supremacist policies and legal systems throughout the US.

NAME recognizes that these efforts to limit education through banning truth-based, caring approaches that see students as who they are continue the white supremacist platform that President Donald Trump elevated. In reality, CRT is not taught in schools, colleges or universities; it is a rarely taught theory largely limited to graduate education. [Banning CRT \(and any other antiracist terms that promote the idea of racial equity\) has been made into a white supremacist rallying cry, reflecting a larger movement against people of color, and especially Black and Indigenous people.](#) Teaching truths about American history, race, gender and identity, some lawmakers charge, will only promote division. NAME, however, knows that the truth is foundational to education, democracy and civil rights.

The states that are taking the backward action of tying educators’ hands include Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia and Wisconsin. But NAME recognizes many other white supremacists echo these sentiments, fighting against the very existence of people of color across school systems.

The [Brookings Institution](#) argued that “critical race theory (CRT) has become a new boogie man for people unwilling to acknowledge our country’s racist history and how it impacts the present.” Conservative candidates in school board races nationwide have won elections this year based on their being against the teaching of critical race theory even when it has never been a subject in their local school districts. NAME knows that an unfortunate outcome of such politically charged rhetoric, state legislative and policymaking rancor over the critical race theory, multicultural education and incorporating [The New York Times Magazine’s 1619 Project](#) into classroom discussions is that out of fear for their jobs, teachers won’t touch these incendiary topics. The intent is to ensure that ongoing violence and structural racism, sexism, homophobia, discrimination, prejudice, and bigotry will then continue on, unchallenged.

Critical race theory may not bring us to the promised land. But banning efforts to engage in multicultural education goes against the very purpose of the NAME organization and all of our members. Now is the time, as always, to stand up, to defend the right of educators to help prepare future generations of children to ensure the US, and the world, are more kind, loving, respectful and reflective of our beautiful range of racial, gendered, cultural and linguistic strengths.