

# 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:

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,  
19 social justice, cultural competence, allyship, race-based  
20 reparations, race-based privilege, race or gender-based  
21 diversity, race or gender-based equity, or race or gender-based  
22 inclusion.

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

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

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

33 4. "*Diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical race*  
34 *theory-related course*" means any course for which the course  
35 description, course overview, course objectives, proposed

1 student learning outcomes, written examinations, or written or  
2 oral assignments for which the student will receive a grade,  
3 includes diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical race  
4 theory-related content.

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

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

23 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. 261K.2 Limitation on academic  
24 requirements.

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

32 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. 261K.3 Limitation on faculty  
33 requirements.

34 A public institution of higher education, or any employee,  
35 appointee, or committee acting on its behalf, shall not

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

34     Sec. 8. **APPLICABILITY.** This Act applies to academic years  
 35 at public institutions of higher education, as defined in

1 section 261K.1, as enacted by this Act, beginning on or after  
2 July 1, 2026.

3 EXPLANATION

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

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

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

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

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

1 requirements, or any other major, minor, or certificate  
2 requirements.

3     The bill authorizes any person to notify the attorney  
4 general of a potential violation of the requirements of the  
5 bill by a regents institution. The attorney general may bring  
6 an action against a regents institution for a writ of mandamus  
7 to compel the institution, or any employee, appointee, or  
8 committee acting on its behalf, to comply with the requirements  
9 of the bill.

10     The bill shall not be construed to limit the academic freedom  
11 of any individual course instructor to direct the instruction  
12 within the instructor's own course or to limit the free  
13 discussion of ideas in a classroom setting.

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