House Passes the “Unbiased Teaching Act,”
Barring Racist, Sexist & Politicized Instruction
in Arizona Schools

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – The Arizona House of Representatives today passed important legislation that bars racist, sexist and politicized instruction in Arizona schools. The “Unbiased Teaching Act,” a floor amendment proposed by State Representative Michelle Udall (R-25), chair of the House Education Committee, was adopted onto SB 1532, which was passed by the House with the support of all 31 House Republicans.

“Racism cannot be combated by teaching children to be racist,” said Representative Udall. “Our country has not always lived up to the concept that ‘all men are created equal,’ still, it is a fundamental ideal that should be upheld by our schools, government institutions, and society. Judging individuals by the color of their skin, ethnic heritage, or sex is deeply wrong. To teach our children otherwise is immoral and fuels corrosive societal tensions within our state and nation.”

Under the Act, a school district, charter school, or state agency is prohibited from requiring teachers to engage students in controversial issues of public policy or social affairs that are not essential to the course learning objectives. If raised for discussion in a class, teachers would be required to present such issues from diverse and contending perspectives without giving deference to any one perspective.

“Issues related to race and sex are appropriate for discussion in an educational environment, and the Unbiased Teaching Act does nothing to prevent that,” added Udall. “In fact, learning about terrible abuses that have occurred in the name of racism or sexism is important if framed in proper context, but no student should ever be taught that a person’s race, ethnicity or sex determines his or her character, bias, treatment, or worth.”

Other provisions prohibit any requirement, assignment of coursework or awarding of class credit for student work that involves lobbying or advocacy for social or public policy. Requiring school employees to engage in any training, orientation, or therapy that presents any form of blame or judgement on the basis of race, ethnicity or sex would not be allowed either. Additionally, a teacher, administrator, or other employee may not require instruction in or make part of curriculum the following concepts:
• One race, ethnicity or sex is inherently morally or intellectually superior to another;
• Any person, by virtue of his or her race, ethnicity or sex, is inherently racist, sexist or oppressive, whether consciously or not;
• An individual should be invidiously discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her race, ethnicity or sex;
• A person’s moral character is determined by his or her race, ethnicity or sex;
• An individual, by virtue of his or her race, ethnicity or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed by others of the same sex, ethnicity or race;
• An individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or other form of psychological distress because of the person’s race, ethnicity or sex; and
• Academic achievement, meritocracy or traits such as a hard work ethic are racist or sexist or were created by members of a particular race or sex to oppress members of another race or sex.

Violations of the law could result in civil penalties up to $5,000 for each incident.

“Political advocacy, propaganda, and biased, one-sided viewpoints taught as fact have no place in a classroom,” said Udall. “If dealing with a divisive controversial topic, educators should present the subjects in a responsible, balanced way that encourages students to think for themselves and draw their own conclusions.”

The bill must now receive final approval by the state Senate before going to the governor.

Michelle Udall is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 25 in Mesa.

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