

Multicultural Education in History and Civil Government (House Bill 1192)

Overview:

HB 1192 would support the development of curricula that includes information about the contributions and cultures of

African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans in history and civil government classes in Colorado public schools.

What does this bill do?

- Provide guidance on multicultural curricula.
- Engaged the community in forums to help develop local curricula.

Talking Points

- This bill will increase students' awareness and appreciation of different cultures and help people understand the beliefs and achievements of a diverse range of cultures.
- It is important that young people of color hear stories and achievements that reflect their community and people like them.
- Reflecting the contributions of people of color shows that we too have helped to build and advance this country and that we are part of continuing to help our state and our country thrive.
- Multicultural education helps us to better understand each other and to cultivate mutual understanding and appreciation for our own community and other cultures.
- When we do not include information on the many ways that different communities have contributed to this country, we do a disservice to young people of color and to the educational community as a whole.
- This legislation is an important step towards ensuring that our public school curricula reflects Colorado values of fairness and equal opportunity.



Multicultural Education: Latino Community and US History

Latinas and our families are a critical part of the fabric of Colorado, but our stories and contributions have not always been included in classroom discussions. When students are not taught about the vast array of ways that people of color have helped to build this country, it is a disservice to students of color and the educational community as a whole.

COLOR is proud to support the *Inclusion of American Minorities in Teaching Civil Government (House Bill 1192)*, a bill that requires all public schools to ensure that that Colorado history and civical government classes include information about the cultures and contributions of the American Indians, Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans.

The Latino community comes from many countries and cultures. We make up about one-sixth of the U.S. population. By the middle of the century, the Latino population is expected to reach 127 million—nearly 30 percent of the projected population of the country. From Congress to the tech sector to the service industry and the medical field, Latinas and Latinos are making big strides and taking critical leadership roles today. Latinos are the ethnic group most likely to start a business, which has helped to create jobs and bolster our economy. We are making our mark today, but the fact is that we have played an important role from the beginning of US history.

- Hispanics of various cultures and origins came from the area that is today known as Mexico and explored North America almost a century before the British first founded Jamestown. There are two cities that were founded by Hispanics before pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock - St. Augustine, Florida, and Sante Fe, New Mexico. We acknowledge that colonization and discovery are nuanced concepts when we think about balancing the idea of history with the very real challenges and problems of colonization in terms of how Native people have been treated.
- The first novel written by a Latina in English was published in 1872. The author was María Amparo Ruiz de Burton and her book *Who Would Have Thought It* offered a bitter critique of U.S. racism while supporting women's suffrage. Latinas, especially Chicanas, played a major role in the women's suffrage movement in the United States.
- When many American men were enlisted and sent abroad during World War I, Mexican workers were encouraged to enter the United States and more than 250,000 Latinos served this country during World War II.

- Before the pivotal ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), in which the Supreme Court declared state laws establishing separate public schools for black and white students to be unconstitutional there was *Mendez v. Westminster*. In this 1947 case, Sylvia Mendez filed a suit after being turned away from a "whites only" public school in California. The Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional to segregate students of Mexican heritage into inferior schools laying the foundation for the groundbreaking ruling in *Brown*.
- Henry González served 37 years in the United States House of Representatives, making him the longest-serving Hispanic Member in Congress. Before heading to Congress, González served in the Texas legislature where he staged two filibusters against bills attempting to preserve segregation in Texas schools. He also shepherded through Congress a provision that created the National Housing Trust, lowering mortgage rates for first-time homebuyers and providing funding for down payments.
- The first Latino to serve in Congress was Joseph Marion Hernández in 1822, a delegate from the Florida territory. The first Latina elected, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen was the first Hispanic woman elected to Congress in 1988. The first Attorney General, Alberto Gonzalez was appointed in 2005 and Justice Sonia Sotomayor became the first Latina to serve on the Supreme Court in 2009.

The Latina community has made significant contributions to every area of our country – arts, science, government and our communities. *The Inclusion of American Minorities in Teaching Civil Government* will ensure that our stories are told. This will help to create unity and cultivate mutual understanding.

SPOTLIGHT ON LATINA LEADERS AND CHANGE MAKERS

From Celia Cruz and Ellen Ochoa to Anna Maria Chávez and Dolores Huerta, there are incredible Latinas who have shaped our history. COLOR works at the intersections – where efforts to honor the history of the Latino community as a whole meets the commitment to hold up the work of women and other groups of people whose experiences, cultures or contributions have not always been part of the conversation.



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