

IFC Resolution Against HB 1134 and Related Bills

Indiana University has been a leader, across all its campuses, in addressing the urgent need for teachers throughout the State of Indiana. In particular, IUPUI has a strong, demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. In a state where culturally responsive education is mandated, the distinct contributions of IU Schools of Education to the development of teachers well equipped to teach all students in culturally responsive, inclusive, and affirming ways is a reason to celebrate. Yet Indiana House Bill 1134, [Education Matters](#), voted out of the Indiana House of Representatives and moving on to the Indiana Senate, threatens much of the progress that has been made. A failure on the University's part to strongly and publicly oppose HB 1134 would seriously undermine Indiana University's commitment to racial and other forms of social justice.

HB 1134 puts IUPUI graduates at risk, as teachers and librarians trained in our holistic and culturally responsive teacher preparation programs would face civil suits in the course of performing their jobs. As written, it would allow for any K-12 student in any class to file a complaint that they were made uncomfortable by a faculty member's teaching about race and racism, sex and sexism, or any other so-called "divisive topic" listed in this bill. HB 1134 also restricts K-12 districts and schools from requiring that students or employees participate in any similar training. If passed, the bill would create systems of surveillance under which K-12 educators and librarians will work under constant scrutiny, where virtually all their classroom materials and activities will have to be posted and reviewed in advance, and where their teaching would need to be approved by community curriculum committees, the majority of whose members are not educators. Schools will be open to civil suits if they violate the provisions of the bill by discussing topics that create "discomfort, anguish...or psychological distress." Teachers, principals, and administrators will risk having their licenses revoked if they violate the bill's provisions. The hostile atmosphere of surveillance and punishment this bill would create around the honest address of racism will almost certainly impact the numbers of educators entering the profession and drive current teachers out, particularly teachers of color.

There is no question that IU and IUPUI university leadership have made important progress in recent years centering social, racial, and economic justice issues— increasing faculty diversity, preparing future teachers, and providing service to the community around issues of equity. We have seen the development of a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion pathway for promotion and tenure, and a new requirement that faculty document the ways in which their work demonstrates evidence of a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the faculty annual reporting system. In addition, IU is funding important efforts through its Racial Justice grant program. This public commitment to, and documentation of, our work in these areas is crucial and demonstrates that Indiana University takes current state mandates to teach cultural responsiveness and cultural competence very seriously.

The disproportionate impact on Black, Brown, and Indigenous People of Color-- K-12 students, their families, and educators in our schools--*implores* the university to take a firm position on protecting the rights of K-12 students and K-12 teachers, many of whom we train.. If we remain silent, we fail our own University community and lose both students and educators of color who will seek out environments that promote diversity, equity and inclusion in education. At the same time, our silence will fail K-12 students' rights to be included in curriculum and instruction and to be taught by teachers who are free to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Related to HB 1134, [Senate Bill 17](#) in its current iteration removes legal protection for school and public librarians doing their professional work. The IU School of Informatics and Computing's Library and Information Science department on the Indianapolis campus trains many of Indiana's librarians. At its core the MLS program, accredited by the American Library Association, holds the professional philosophy that every learner should have the freedom to read and opposes censorship. SB 17 overtly characterizes the creation of a balanced collection as pushing harmful agendas, and the librarian who creates the collection as a threat to the patrons served by the collection. Subversively, the bill will cause professionals to deselect certain materials before they are attacked or even censor materials prior to inclusion for fear of being accused of providing materials harmful to minors as defined by singular points of view.

On these grounds let it be resolved, we, the faculty in the IUPUI Faculty Council, the elected representatives of all IUPUI faculty, firmly oppose HB 1134, SB 17, and similar legislation. We see our opposition as an expression of our commitment to racial justice and equity. We also see our opposition to this bill as an expression of our support for public school teachers at all levels and to Indiana students, families, and communities of color.

Passed by the IUPUI Faculty Council on January 28, 2022.