

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 59th Legislature (2023)

3 HOUSE BILL 1397

By: Lepak

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5
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to schools; mandating curriculum
8 include a unit on the civil rights movement;
9 providing description of curriculum; directing the
10 State Superintendent of Public Instruction to prepare
11 and make available materials; providing for
12 codification; and providing an effective date.

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

14 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
15 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 11-103.15 of Title 70, unless
16 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

17 A. Every public elementary school and high school in the State
18 of Oklahoma shall include in its curriculum a unit of instruction
19 studying the events of the civil rights movement from 1954 to 1968,
20 the natural law and natural rights principles that the Rev. Dr.
21 Martin Luther King, Jr., drew from that informed his leadership of
22 the civil rights movement, and the tactics and strategies of
23 nonviolent resistance that he championed in response to the Jim Crow
24 laws of that era. This period in American history is known as the
civil rights era because during this period reform-minded Americans

1 organized to press for a rejection of the doctrine of "separate but
2 equal" and to repeal the Jim Crow-era laws in parts of the United
3 States that embodied that doctrine. One of the universal lessons of
4 the civil rights era is that hatred on the basis of immutable
5 characteristics, including not just race or ethnicity, but also
6 characteristics such as nationality, religious belief, disability,
7 or sex, can overtake any nation or society, leading to profound
8 injustice. To reinforce that lesson, such curriculum shall include
9 an additional unit of instruction studying other acts of
10 discriminatory injustice, such as genocide, committed elsewhere
11 around the globe. This unit shall include, but not be limited to,
12 the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, Chinese "Coolie" labor in
13 Cuba, the Uyghurs in China, and the Rohingya of Burma. The study of
14 this material is a reaffirmation of the commitment of the people of
15 this state to reject bigotry, to champion equal protection under the
16 law as a foundational principle of our Republic, and to act in
17 opposition to injustice wherever it may occur.

18 B. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction shall prepare
19 and make available to all state public school boards instructional
20 materials that may be used as guidelines for development of a unit
21 of instruction under this act.

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SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2023.

59-1-5079 MJ 11/16/22