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**Capitol View
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**CRT and Sex Education Are Better Taught at Home**

Parental responsibility.

Anybody out there old enough to remember that? Perhaps you grew up with it or had the opportunity to exhibit it to your children. That’s where we learned a lot of basic life skills, the things they didn’t have to teach us in school because, let’s face it, times were different then.

Well, pardon me while I walk out on a limb here and suggest that a couple hot-button items currently agitating Nebraskans are probably better left to be taught at home. Let’s take a practical look at health education standards and critical race theory. Do either one of them need to be a formal part of the public-school curriculum?

Traditionally, sex education was a part of “the talk” that we kids had with either mom or dad. Period. Don’t call me naïve, I raised two boy children who are now in their 30s. A large part of “the talk” that my wife and I had with the boys was about respect for our bodies and those of members of the opposite sex.

Granted, they weren’t bombarded with X-rated movies, foul language and sex scenes on TV and in social media (which didn’t exist) like kids are today. But I contend that’s where parental responsibility can make a huge difference, especially today.

The second draft of the state's health education standards were discussed by the more than 100 people who showed up at a marathon Nebraska Board of Education meeting recently. While much of the controversial sex education references from the first draft were stripped from this version, some complained it still goes too far and deprives parents of their fundamental rights.

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What, exactly, are those fundamental rights? Parental responsibility and the right to teach this controversial topic at home based on your own values and mores developed by years of experience, education and understanding.

Sounds fair enough. It appears that the divided Board will be creating a third draft. Some want a third attempt; others want to reestablish trust with the public.

There’s the more politically charged Critical Race Theory, which, as I understand it, is a framework for examining the effects race and racism have on institutions, both historically and today. Ever since the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer, it has become the flashpoint in the culture wars. Several state legislatures have enacted measures prohibiting the teaching of the theory.

An attempt by a University of Nebraska Regent to ban it from being taught on campus was recently defeated. Despite support from the Governor and three other statewide office holders and 22 members of the Legislature, opposition from students, faculty and administrators stopped the ban. The theory is taught mainly in law school classes.

Critical race theory was developed by scholars during the 1970s and 1980s in response to what they viewed as a lack of racial progress following civil rights legislation of the 1960s. It centers on the idea that racism is systemic in the nation's institutions and that they function to maintain the dominance of white people in society.

Proponents argue that the country was founded on the theft of land and labor and that federal law has preserved the unequal treatment of people based on race. Proponents also believe race is culturally invented, not biological. Kimberlé Crenshaw of the African American Policy Forum, a social justice think tank based in New York City, says it was “simply about telling a more complete story of who we are.”

So far, 25 states have considered legislation or other steps to limit how race and racism can be taught, according to an analysis from Education Week. Eight states have banned or limited the teaching of critical race theory or similar concepts through laws or administrative actions.

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Let’s take this one home. My folks taught me that race matters only to racists. The rest of us care about character.

It’s the responsibility of parents to teach that all-important value. I’m glad that my folks did, and I hope I have instilled that to another generation, which will also pay it forward.

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