



August 12, 2021

University of Nebraska Board of Regents
3835 Holdrege Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68583

***RE: Support for an honest education about race in this country - opposition to resolution
Addendum VII-1***

Dear University of Nebraska Board of Regents,

Nebraska Appleseed is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to fighting for justice and opportunity for all Nebraskans. For years, we have worked closely with community partners and educators across the state to build inclusive communities, where everyone can feel safe, respected, and valued. We know that we must work and learn together to ensure our shared future, purpose, and prosperity. Understanding our country's racial history is a vital step toward ensuring our state is committed to building strong, inclusive communities for all Nebraskans.

We must know our history. Learning about the history of race and how it informs our present helps us all become wiser and stronger. While race is a legal and social construct and not a scientific fact, it has very real outcomes. We must seek to know the history, and the barriers and structures of racism that impact us today in order to learn from our mistakes as a country and as individuals, in order to do better in the future. Critical race theory is a key part of that discussion. History also shows that when we work together across our differences, we accomplish great things for ourselves, our loved ones, our neighbors, and our community.

Addressing the harmful impact of systemic racism benefits us all. Systemic racism describes the barriers we have together inherited from a combination of history and imperfect institutions that are a work in progress, and systemic racism is real. We see it in Nebraska in local schools, workplaces, and in the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Systemic racism explains the differences in opportunities and outcomes across race. Systemic racism primarily hurts Black people, Indigenous people, Latinx people, and Asian American and Pacific Islander people; and it also has limited many opportunities for the vast majority of white people. We must not be "colorblind" to the reality of systemic racism. Instead, we must be "race-conscious" in our efforts to understand and fix our country's problems. That means directly addressing the harm that systemic racism has caused to people of color and local communities.

Promote belonging for all Nebraskans. Learning about the issues that impact our communities is the first step in creating a sense of belonging. We must have honest, courageous,

and sometimes uncomfortable conversations about systemic racism -- within our neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. When we're willing to learn, we can work together in advancing racial equity, benefiting us all and strengthening our local communities across the state.

For these reasons, we strongly oppose the Resolution regarding critical race theory, Addendum VII-1, that would mistakenly and harmfully limit the learning of our shared history in curriculum, training, and programming for students at the University of Nebraska. We all deserve an honest education and conversation about race in this country and we cannot be a welcoming and inclusive community without it.

Sincerely,

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Cc:
Student Regents, University of Nebraska

Corporation Secretary, University of Nebraska Board of Regents

Becky Gould
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