



September 13, 2021

Senator Jason M. Lewis, Chair
State House, Room 511-B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Alice Hanlon Peisch, Chair
Joint Committee on Education
State House, Room 473-G
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Lewis, Chair Peisch, and distinguished committee members,

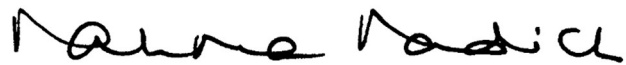
Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding S365/H584, *An Act relative to anti-racism, equity and justice in education*, filed by Senator Jason M Lewis, Representative Nika C. Elugardo and Representative Erika Uytterhoeven. I write on behalf of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Greater Boston. JCRC is a coalition of organizations and individuals that represent and advance the values, interests and priorities of the organized Jewish community throughout greater Boston. Our mission is to serve as a catalyst for building a strong and vibrant Jewish community in Boston and around the world, and to promote an American society which is democratic, pluralistic and just.

JCRC is aware that research has shown that students are empowered when they see themselves and their histories reflected in their school curriculum, leading to better grades and higher graduation rates. We believe strongly that all students in the Commonwealth deserve to have this experience, regardless of their religion, race, sexual orientation, or nation of origin. JCRC welcomes the opportunity to be a member organization serving on a commission with the goal of developing a more inclusive curriculum for students across Massachusetts.

However, we must also echo the concerns of some of our member organizations about the language of these bills that prevents us from being able to endorse them in their current form. We are particularly concerned about issues relating to oversight of the commission (in the bills' current form, the commission has no members from the legislature or the administration, for example), transparency, definitions of vague terms in the commission's enumerated goals, and the fiscal power of the commission to disburse funds without requiring legislative or administrative oversight.

We look forward to future opportunities to have more in-depth conversations with you and the bills' proponents about our shared commitment to the importance of this effort and our concerns about the current language. We hope to be able to help develop legislation that is more clear, strong and that we can whole-heartedly support down the line.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nahma Nadich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nahma Nadich
Deputy Director
JCRC of Greater Boston