

# Try This One Weird Trick to Get Politics Out of Education

Over the last two years — since the *New York Times* introduced its 1619 Project to “reframe the country’s history” around the consequences of slavery — something called “Critical Race Theory” has become the new football in the never-ending political struggle to control the content of K-12 education in America.

“Conservative” opponents of CRT claim that it’s bad history, that those behind it want to build a totalitarian, race-based America, and that it’s infiltrated virtually every educational institution (they support that last claim by putting the CRT label on anything and everything they dislike).

“Progressives” level similar accusations at state-level bills to ban CRT, as well as efforts like former President Donald Trump’s “1776 Commission,” which aimed to promote “patriotic education” (President Joe Biden dissolved the Commission).

What’s important here isn’t so much whether Critical Race Theory or “patriotic education” constitutes an historically accurate curriculum (I vote “neither”). This isn’t actually a struggle over the facts. It’s a struggle to determine who gets to indoctrinate America’s future voters in a particular political ideology.

It’s far from the first such struggle. We’ve been having these fights ever since “public” education became a thing in America, and over everything from sex education (whether to have it at all, and if so whether to acknowledge LGBTQ orientations and whether to discuss contraception or preach “abstinence only”) to evolution versus creationism. Those past fights, too, were far more about pushing partisan political propaganda than about the facts or, for that matter, what was best for the kids.

It’s actually a simple problem with a simple solution.

No, I’m not thinking of “school choice” proposals like taxpayer-financed “charter” schools or voucher/tax credit programs which distribute taxpayer money to supposedly “private” schools. Those proposals simply create new government schools and/or turn “private” INTO government schools with attached strings, as we’ve seen in higher education with the GI Bill, Pell Grants, and government-guaranteed student loans. As long as tax funding is involved, education will remain political.

If we want politics out of education, we have to separate school and state. Entirely. No government involvement whatsoever. Parents can homeschool their kids, or join with other parents to teach small groups, or hire private tutors, or pay tuition at private schools — without one thin dime of taxpayer aid or one crumb of government permission or bureaucratic control.

I said the solution is simple, and it is. “Simple” doesn’t mean the same thing as “easy,” or for that matter “equal” — yes, I’m aware that some parents have more money and/or time and/or teaching skill than others to invest in their kids’ education.

Quality education is certainly a desirable service, and one government schools continue to get worse and worse at providing. Universal access is a laudable goal, but only if it’s access to something worthwhile.

Getting politics out of education would go a long way toward solving quality problems as well, but there’s only one way to get politics out of education, and that’s to get government out of education.

The sooner the better.