



Parental Roles in Education

Safeguarding A Child's Future

Written by Abby Arnett



Parental Roles in Education: Safeguarding a child's future

Abby Arnett | Opinion contributor

The 2021 Virginia gubernatorial election defied political norms. A state that traditionally bleeds blue elected a Republican governor. Virginians voted in droves. The reason? Education.

The COVID-19 pandemic shed new light on the nation's school systems. For the first time, parents of children attending online school got to directly see what their children learned outside the home. Online school alerted parents to curriculums that didn't fit the needs of their children. Such curriculums were chosen by teachers, school boards and politicians. Perhaps the COVID-19 pandemic secured the win for Republican and Virginia governor-elect, Glen Youngkin.

Youngkin believes in the power of parents. As a politician, he understands that school curriculums and policies should not come from the government. Instead, Youngkin emphasizes that parents should be fully involved in their child's education. "I believe that parents matter," Youngkin says. "I'll never put government bureaucrats or politicians between parents and their kids."

Parents, vote for a candidate, like Youngkin, who fights to protect parents and uphold traditional educational values. Voting for a Republican in the upcoming 2022 Pennsylvania gubernatorial election will protect your children.

Stick to the basics

In the summer of 2020, the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor sparked waves of Black Lives Matter protests nationwide. Since then, Americans have gone to great lengths to halt racism within the country. Critical race theory is now being taught in schools and is evidence of these efforts.

Critical race theory has two main points. The first argues that race is a social construct "used to oppress people of color." The second explains the way "the law and legal institutions in the United States are inherently racist." The main objective of critical race theory is to teach children about America's racist history.

Most parents agree that learning from the past is undoubtedly important. Parents become unsettled when critical race theory concepts, like race essentialism, are pushed by governments and political activists and taught in public schools. Race essentialism is a "belief in a genetic or biological essence that defines all members of a racial category." Simply put, race essentialism categorizes students based on nothing but race. A parent's role becomes tricky when political agendas are pushed in the classroom. Critical race theory has no place in American primary schools. Such topics are best suited for university curriculum. Children attend school to learn fundamentals.

Recent changes in sex education standards also have no place in American primary schools. Several states have implemented ways to modernize sex education curriculum. These changes ensure lessons like consent and sexual safety are taught in the classroom.

Education in Pennsylvania is not ideal. According to U.S. News and World Report, Pennsylvania ranks 37 out of 50 states in education based on test scores and college readiness. Additionally, Pennsylvania schools are completely underfunded. The Pennsylvania School Board shows it ranks 44th in the country in the “state’s share of funding for public schools.” In fact, the PSB explains only 38% of the costs of public education is covered by the state of Pennsylvania. With such little funding, Pennsylvania quite literally cannot afford to spend money on extra programs like critical race theory and sex education. All funding should go toward basic skills like reading, writing and math. These foundational skills set students up for success. A simple check on a ballot gives parents the power to ensure taxes fund the areas of most importance.

Conflicting curriculum

If Pennsylvania parents don’t vote to control their children’s education, their children could potentially learn the opposite of what they are being taught at home. Critical race theory is often weaved throughout American politics. It causes tension between the right and the left. Children of Republican parents are not taught critical race theory in their homes. Yet, when they come to school and learn about it, the teachings contradict those of their parents. This is confusing and unnecessary. Who, then, is the child to listen to? Which voice is correct?

The same goes for sex education. Sex education is a parental decision. Oftentimes, parents aren’t ready to teach their children things that they are already learning in school sex education programs. Reasons for this may involve religion or simple parental preference. Schools shouldn’t take that choice away from a parent.

Parents have the right to teach their children political concepts in their own ways, on their own timeframes, infused with their own values.

Creating change

Some argue that critical race theory is important because it forces Americans to acknowledge our country’s racist history. To create change, we must know how our history impacts the present. These are valid arguments. Nevertheless, there is a time and a place. It is not the role of a teacher, school board or politician to determine those times.

People also argue that sex education improves public health and protects those of different sexual orientations. These might be true. However, it is not the school’s job to convey such messages.

As minors, children are under the care and supervision of their parents. Not the teachers. Voting to uphold parental influence on education avoids confusion and conflict.

Filial relationship

Teachers, school boards and politicians think they know best. As a result, they feel they have a societal duty to teach and promote more politically charged topics in schools. When all is said and done, these people don’t know children the way parents do. They don’t spend sleepless nights

tending to a child frightened by a nightmare. They don't spend evenings preparing their picky child's favorite meal. They don't sit front row at their child's first dance recital. There is nothing quite like the bond between a parent and child. If a parent is the only one who truly knows their child, it makes no sense to allow anyone other than a parent to dictate how things are taught. Vote to preserve the sacred rights of parents.

Abby Arnett is a student at Brigham Young University studying public relations. Post-graduation in December 2022, Abby plans to take the LSAT and apply to law schools across the country.