



Monadnock Interfaith Project

Building An Interfaith Coalition for Community, Understanding, and Social Justice

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Keene Sentinel
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To the Editor:

The letter below has been submitted to the NH House Finance Committee and will be read into the record at the Hearing, May 4, 2021.

Honorable Senators of the New Hampshire Senate Finance Committee:

Monadnock Interfaith Project (MIP) stands with other New Hampshire organizations and businesses in opposition to the recently introduced NH House Bill 544 that seeks to prohibit teaching about systemic racism and sexism in public schools and state funded programs.

MIP is a non-profit coalition of congregations, organizations, and individuals working together to foster interfaith community, understanding, and systemic change that benefits the Monadnock region. Our work is inspired by the sacrifices and teachings of our many cherished religious leaders, including Moses, Jesus, Prophet Muhammad, Gautama Buddha, Gandhi, and Mother Teresa who all walked with people who were vulnerable and marginalized, and sought to change systems and cultural practices for greater equality.

HB544 was tabled, but its language was added to the House Budget and will be taken up by the NH Senate Finance Committee. The intent of HB544 contradicts MIP's mission for community understanding and mutual respect. Our opposition to HB544 is rooted in our commitment to what Dr. Martin Luther King called "the beloved community." We can only create a more tolerant, loving and compassionate place for us all if we are able to provide that place to all of us.

In the Jewish tradition of Tikkun Olam, we all bear responsibility not only for our own moral, spiritual, and material welfare, but also for the welfare of society at large. These teachers and traditions challenge us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Collectively, we need to face head on the present racism and sexism, existing in virtually every system in our lives - education, criminal justice, housing, economy, and religion.

Proposing to suppress certain facts of our collective histories, because those facts are seen by the proponents of this bill to be "Divisive Concepts," that may be painful to certain people chills not only the spine, but the heart of our democracy.

Instead of limiting discussion, let's commit to deep reflection, hard conversations, and changing practices and policies in all our institutions to move beyond racism and sexism.

Together we as a society can grow with trust, faith, compassion and love.

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