

Shira a law by the arizona state governor

[Art & Culture](#), [Multiculturalism](#)



Shira DavisLIT 233Professor Draegan15 November 2017Banned BooksThe State of Arizona took it upon themselves to ban many books from the classrooms of K-12th grade students, one these books being A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America. These books were banned mainly because race, ethnicity and oppression are among their central themes. This law, HB 2281, ultimately bans students from learning about their culture and other ethnic groups culture. All these cultures helped shape America into what it is today. This brings up the question, should ethnics studies be banned or regulated? I believe this law should be abolished, along with many others who feel that the claims that are made against ethnic studies are brutally invalid. In 2010, the same year that Arizona passed the nation's toughest law on illegal immigration, a group of Republican legislators in the State of Arizona designed a legislation to ban the course of ethnic studies, Arizona House Bill 2281.

The HB 2281 was signed into a law by the Arizona state Governor Jan Brewer. This bill was introduced by Attorney General Tom Horne do to the growing concern over Mexican-American studies. This ban targeted the Mexican American studies class taught in Tuscan Unified School District. The legislators wanted to implement the ban on Mexican-American studies while leaving similar classes geared around other cultures like Asian, black, and Native American intact.

It prohibits programs in schools that “ promote the overthrow of the United States government”, “ promote resentment toward a race or class of people” or, “ advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals” (Phippen, J. Weston). This law came about as a reaction from

<https://assignbuster.com/shira-a-law-by-the-arizona-state-governor/>

some Arizona Republic officials who felt upset at what they observed as Mexican-American studies instructors creating resentment against whites. The debate started in 2007 when civil rights leader Dolores Huerta visited a Tucson school, where she famously said that Republicans hate Hispanics. This got the Superintendent Public Instruction Tom Horne really upset, he then sent his deputy, who is herself Hispanic Republican, to offer a counter-speech to Dolores's words.

As she spoke, students got upset because they were not allowed to ask any questions. In response, they stood up in the crowd and put tape across their mouths to protest. This made Tom Horne even angrier, which led him to starting this campaign to restrict the teaching of ethnic studies specifically to shut down this Tucson program (" Arizona's Ethnic Studies Ban in Public Schools Goes to Trial.").

Public schools in Tucson were then put into a limbo situation. Some books were banned, and some books were not banned but not allowed. There were also very vague instructions on how these subjects can be taught. The district then cut the Mexican-American studies program, so that it could fit in accordance to the HB 2281 law. The reason for this cut was that supporters for this law felt that this course was politicizing students and breeding resentment.

The district slowly removed more and more books. People began accusing the district for banning books and they said that they were not banned, the books were just removed from the classrooms and placed in libraries ("

Neither Banned nor Allowed: Mexican American Studies in Limbo in Arizona.”).

One of these books that was banned was *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* by Ronald Takaki. The book talks about different minorities and their perspective on how they were treated when they came to America. It talks about all different types of people including, Native Americans, African-Americans, the slavery era, Irish, Mexicans, Chicanos, Chinese, Japanese, and Jews. Each chapter/section discusses the history of a different ethnic group and covers public attitudes towards the minority, public policy, laws for or against the minority, and the attitude of the minority towards their situation that was going on at that time. Each minority went through their own hardships and discriminations in multicultural America. For example, during the economic depression, Congress passed the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.

This law was the first law that prohibited entry to immigrants based on their nationality (Takaki 246). It was later removed. Another example, the Irish immigrants felt that they were viewed as oblivious and substandard. In the South, they would do jobs that were considered dangerous because slave owners were nervous to risk losing their slaves over those hazardous jobs (Takaki 321).

I feel, being that this book discusses all the different hardships, and how many of these minorities were oppressed, is probably the reason it was banned under the HB 2281 law. This book also discusses race and ethnicity. These different cultures are what helped make America what it is today. All

these different types of people transformed America into a great economy and an incredible unique society of different races, ethnicities, and religions (Takaki 573). Another reason why I feel that *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* is banned, is that it shows numerous times where the United States admitted to mistakes of oppression and discrimination.

An example of this is during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln originally did not allow any colored people to join the army because he was scared the white soldiers would not fight with them. Later in the war, there was a shortage of soldiers. President Lincoln wrote a letter to the military governor of Tennessee allowing colored people to join the army.

Many escaped slaves that wanted to liberate their families joined the army to fight against the South. Though there were many losses, the North ended up winning the war. Lincoln praised the “black warriors” for helping fight and win the war (Takaki 447). Another example is that many Japanese-Americans enlisted and served in the United States Armed Forces. They left their families behind in the internment camps.

In 1988, Congress passed a bill providing for an apology and a payment of \$20, 000 to each Japanese-American survivor of the World War II internment camps. When President Ronald Reagan signed the bill, he admitted that the United States had committed “a grave wrong” (Takaki 491). It is important to read and learn about these different points in history, so we can learn from them. People might think, ‘I am not a Mexican-American, so why should this affect me or why should it bother me?’ Banning classes and

books that discuss an ethnic group, or many ethnic groups are not only harmful to those specific ethnicities but to everyone in America.

It is almost as if we are saying that their history and culture is irrelevant. It is important to know how America became what it is today, and the only way to do that is learn about all the different people who were involved in the process. America is known as ‘ the melting pot of cultures’, but how can it be known as that when all that is important is ‘ white culture’. We can not censor our history, what is done is done. It is important to recognize how much these groups have added to the cultural make up of our country, and how significant it is to have multiple perspectives when assessing the history of our country. These censorships do not justify American standards. As Cesar Chavez once said, “ Preservation of one’s own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures” (Julia Anderson). Learning about one’s culture should make them proud of who they are.

Depriving children from learning about their ancestors and their traditions is unjust. It is important for them to know where they came from, how their cultures interconnect, and how they got to where they are today. It is important to learn about different ethnicities for one’s education (“ Luisurrea. com.”). Everyone has a different story to tell, and everyone wants to know how they fit into America.

No one should be ashamed of their ancestors or roots. The Dean of a Minnesota university was asked why multiculturalism is so important, he said that as a national university, Minnesota has to offer a national curriculum.

That means that includes historical information about all different types of people in America.

He added that after students graduate, many of them move to other cities like Chicago or Los Angeles and therefore need to know about racial diversity. Furthermore, many educationalists stress, multiculturalism has an intellectual purpose: a more comprehensive curriculum is also a more accurate one (Takaki 214). Starting to teach multiculturalism young is very important for the child and their education. Kindergarten through 12th grade is a crucial learning time for children. Today's children need a different set of skills to graduate than their parents. Current events and international disasters can teach children about other societies, from government and economics to family structure in a household. Through learning about these disasters, children's minds are more open to lending a hand to someone in need. For example, when a child learns about an earthquake that happened in a different country, he or she would want to try and help those who were affected by the disaster.

Cultural content also helps review one's preconceptions about a certain culture and hopefully help them treat everyone the same. By exposing children to different cultures when they are young, can help them become more open-minded citizens. Learning to accept other people's differences younger can also help children once they get to the workplace. It is not only about learning math and science, children need to learn about adaptability and effective communication skills. Those different skills can help children

work well with others (“ Importance of Multicultural Classrooms.”). Ignorance is probably one of the most important challenges facing humanity.

Without the interference of differences, people cannot appreciate what each of us has in common. Once we can acknowledge those differences, we can work toward a truly egalitarian world. Multiculturalism helps against ignorance because it dilutes and disintegrates the divisiveness. It is important because immigrants bring diversity. They bring different knowledge and experience as well as increasing innovation, creativity and prosperity to America.

It is important because it encourages discussion, often between completely different perspectives. Multiculturalism helps soften the indifference of tolerance and is the bridge between the divide of tolerance and acceptance. Differences aside, people, regardless of their specific culture of origin, try to provide the best they can for their family, and to live in as peaceful and sweet of a world as possible. These two goals are what unite us all.

Multiculturalism makes the perfect humane concept of loving our fellow man a palpable possibility, rather than a vague philosophical concept (“ The value of multiculturalism.

“). Unfortunately, this censorship is still an ongoing issue. The HB 2281 is still in court trying to be revoked and removed based on it being unconstitutional (“ Arizona’s Ethnic Studies Ban in Public Schools Goes to Trial.

“). This is still a major struggle today, and people’s rights are being belittled. I feel these classes and books should not be banned or have to be regulated

by the government. We must fight for those people's rights that were taken away from them, we must fight for our children, and we must fight for ourselves.