

1 **Government Bill #2**  
2 **2021-2022**  
3 **Resolution On Academic Freedom and Regent Pillen’s Resolution Addressing Critical Race**  
4 **Theory**

5  
6 **WHEREAS**, the “University of Nebraska – through its four campuses – strives to be the  
7 best public university in the country as measured by the impact we have on our people and our  
8 state, and – through them – the world”;<sup>1</sup> and,  
9

10 **WHEREAS**, “the University of Nebraska at Kearney [UNK] is a public, residential  
11 university committed to be one of the nation’s premier undergraduate institutions with excellent  
12 graduate education, scholarship, and public service.” Furthermore, UNK values fostering  
13 **Learning** that offers “a climate of rigorous inquiry, unfettered exchange of ideas, and mutual  
14 respect”; ensuring a “student centered” **Learning Environment**; prioritizing its **People** through  
15 an “inclusive environment that affords equitable access and opportunity”; and **Responsible**  
16 **Stewardship**;<sup>2</sup> and,  
17

18 **WHEREAS**, the University of Nebraska at Lincoln’s [UNL] mission “as Nebraska’s  
19 only land-grant, comprehensive, research institution...is to teach, to do research, and to serve  
20 Nebraskans.” Furthermore, UNL values **Learning** that “prepares students for lifetime success  
21 and leadership”; **Excellence**; **Achievement**; **Diversity** “of ideas and people”; **Engagement** “with  
22 academic, business, and civic communities throughout Nebraska and the world”; **Research** “and  
23 creative activity that inform teaching, foster discovery, and contribute to economic prosperity  
24 and our quality of life”; and **Stewardship**;<sup>3</sup> and,  
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26 **WHEREAS**, the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s [UNMC] mission is to “lead  
27 the world in transforming lives to create a healthy future for all individuals and communities  
28 through premier educational programs, innovative research and extraordinary patient care.”  
29 Furthermore, UNMC values **Innovation**; **Teamwork** by “respect[ing] diversity and one  
30 another”; **Excellence** by striving for quality; **Accountability**; **Courage** to “make tough decisions  
31 and have no fear of failure in the pursuit of excellence”; and **Healing**;<sup>4</sup> and,  
32

33 **WHEREAS**, the University of Nebraska at Omaha [UNO], “as both a Metropolitan  
34 University of distinction and a Carnegie Doctoral Research institution...transforms and improves  
35 the quality of life locally, nationally, and globally.” Furthermore, UNO values **Excellence** by  
36 “focusing on exceptional education, groundbreaking research, and the life-long success of our  
37 students and alumni”; **Engagement**; **Inclusion** through “creating an environment that is  
38 welcoming, open, and diverse...”; **Discovery** by “fostering a culture of critical thinking and  
39 creativity and upholding the rigorous pursuit and exchange of knowledge”; **Integrity**; and  
40 **Maverick Spirit** by “exemplifying strength, resilience, curiosity, independent thinking, and  
41 entrepreneurship in our everyday deeds and collective endeavors”;<sup>5</sup> and,  
42

43 **WHEREAS**, “the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, a body corporate  
44 created by the people of Nebraska through the Constitution, has constitutional and statutory  
45 power for general supervision over all elements of the University, control and direction of all  
46 expenditures, and for general operating policies of the University”;<sup>6</sup> and,

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48       **WHEREAS**, a resolution that opposes “any imposition of Critical Race Theory [CRT] in  
49 curriculum” is planned to be introduced to the Board of Regents by Regent Jim Pillen at the  
50 August 13, 2021, Board of Regents meeting; <sup>7</sup> and,

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52       **WHEREAS**, according to the American Bar Association, CRT is “a practice of  
53 interrogating the role of race and racism in society” that “critiques how the social construction of  
54 race and institutionalized racism perpetuate a racial caste system that relegates people of color to  
55 the bottom tiers”; <sup>8</sup> and,

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57       **WHEREAS**, The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska dedicates itself to  
58 promoting and honoring academic freedom in Bylaw 4.2, which reads: “the Board [of Regents]  
59 reaffirms belief in, pledges support of, and directs all segments of the University community to  
60 sustain and follow the foregoing principles of Academic Freedom”; Error! Bookmark not defined. and,

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62       **WHEREAS**, on July 21, 2021, the President and Chancellors of the University of  
63 Nebraska released a statement affirming the University leadership’s intention to “vigorously  
64 protect and defend academic freedom at the University of Nebraska”. Additionally, they shared  
65 their “significant concerns” regarding Regent Pillen’s resolution and the effect it may have on  
66 students, faculty, and staff; <sup>9</sup> and,

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68       **WHEREAS**, Regent Pillen’s resolution violates the Board of Regents’ binding  
69 commitment to academic freedom by attempting to regulate curriculum; and,

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71       **WHEREAS**, the Student Body Presidents of the University of Nebraska believe that the  
72 classrooms on our four respective campuses are the quintessential environment for the rigorous  
73 pursuit and exchange of knowledge to occur. Furthermore, we believe that higher education, and  
74 the University of Nebraska specifically, should foster a culture of and promote critical,  
75 independent thinking; and,

76  
77       **WHEREAS**, the Student Body Presidents of the four University of Nebraska campuses  
78 believe that our world-class faculty are best positioned to determine curriculum and establish  
79 space for critical, independent thinking.

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81       **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Regent Pillen’s resolution undermines the  
82 mission statements and values of the four University of Nebraska campuses as it violates  
83 academic and creative freedom, decreases opportunities for critical and independent thinking,  
84 and therefore, hinders the University’s ability to provide a premier education; and

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86       **THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Student Government of the  
87 University of Nebraska strongly opposes Regent Pillen’s resolution; and,

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89       **THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the aforementioned governing  
90 body, that includes UNL, UNO, and UNK, beseeches the Board of Regents to reject Regent  
91 Pillen’s resolution at the August 13<sup>th</sup> Board of Regents meeting.

94 <sup>1</sup> University of Nebraska. n.d. *Get to Know Nebraska*. Retrieved 25 Jul 2021 from:  
95 <https://nebraska.edu/get-to-know-nebraska>

97 <sup>2</sup> University of Nebraska at Kearney. n.d. *Mission Statement*. Retrieved 25 Jul 2021 from:  
98 <https://www.unk.edu/about/mission.php>

100 <sup>3</sup> University of Nebraska at Lincoln. n.d. *UNL Strategic Compass: Our Vision/Mission/Core*  
101 *Values*. Retrieved 25 Jul 2021 from: <https://www.unl.edu/chancellor/compass/vision.shtml>

103 <sup>4</sup> University of Nebraska Medical Center. n.d. *Mission & Values*. Retrieved 25 Jul 2021 from:  
104 <https://www.unmc.edu/aboutus/history/index.html>

106 <sup>5</sup> University of Nebraska at Omaha. n.d. *Mission, Vision, and Values*. Retrieved 25 Jul 2021  
107 from: <https://www.unomaha.edu/strategic-planning/plan/index.php>

109 <sup>6</sup> Board of Regents for the University of Nebraska. (2021). *Bylaws*. Retrieved 25 Jul 2021 from:  
110 [https://nebraska.edu/-/media/unca/docs/offices-and-policies/policies/board-governing-](https://nebraska.edu/-/media/unca/docs/offices-and-policies/policies/board-governing-documents/board-of-regents-bylaws.pdf?la=en)  
111 [documents/board-of-regents-bylaws.pdf?la=en](https://nebraska.edu/-/media/unca/docs/offices-and-policies/policies/board-governing-documents/board-of-regents-bylaws.pdf?la=en)

113 <sup>7</sup> Walton, D. (2021). Pillen asks fellow NU regents to formally oppose critical race theory.  
114 Lincoln Journal Star. Retrieved 26 Jul 2021 from:  
115 [https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/pillen-asks-fellow-nu-regents-to-formally-oppose-](https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/pillen-asks-fellow-nu-regents-to-formally-oppose-critical-race-theory/article_d32c38a8-29ff-543b-aafa-079903118905.html)  
116 [critical-race-theory/article\\_d32c38a8-29ff-543b-aafa-079903118905.html](https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/pillen-asks-fellow-nu-regents-to-formally-oppose-critical-race-theory/article_d32c38a8-29ff-543b-aafa-079903118905.html)

118 <sup>8</sup> American Bar Association. (2021). *A Lesson on Critical Race Theory*. Retrieved from:  
119 [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human\\_rights\\_magazine\\_home/civil-](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/civil-rights-reimagining-policing/a-lesson-on-critical-race-theory/)  
120 [rights-reimagining-policing/a-lesson-on-critical-race-theory/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/civil-rights-reimagining-policing/a-lesson-on-critical-race-theory/)

122 <sup>9</sup> University of Nebraska. (2021). *A Statement in Defense of Academic Freedom at the University*  
123 *of Nebraska*. Retrieved 25 Jul 2021 from:  
124 [https://nebraska.edu/president/communications/speeches/2021/07/a-statement-in-defense-of-](https://nebraska.edu/president/communications/speeches/2021/07/a-statement-in-defense-of-academic-freedom-at-the-university-of-nebraska)  
125 [academic-freedom-at-the-university-of-nebraska](https://nebraska.edu/president/communications/speeches/2021/07/a-statement-in-defense-of-academic-freedom-at-the-university-of-nebraska)

