

**From:** George Ayoub [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 11, 2021 1:53 PM  
**To:** Paul Kenney  
**Subject:** Pillen Proposal

## Non-NU Email

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July 11, 2021

Dear Regent Kenney

I write today to ask that you vote against Regent Jim Pillen's proposal to require the university to oppose "any imposition of critical race theory."

Never mind that Pillen is running for governor and such a suggestion appears to be nothing more than a political maneuver. The effects of its passage would be lasting, however. Such a misguided policy would make the University of Nebraska a laughing stock among colleges and universities where serious scholarship, academic inquiry, and academic freedom are championed, not questioned.

My hope is that during debate another regent might ask Pillen if he can define critical race theory. While I'm neither an expert on the theory nor its application to economics, public policy, or the writing of legislation, any cursory research into critical race theory runs counter to Pillen's previous comments that it is somehow "factually and morally" wrong. In short, my sense is that he understands neither the theory nor its application.

Further, perhaps he should be asked to cite an example of any deleterious effect from its use, an imagined application the governor of Nebraska erroneously calls "un-American." Both Pillen and the governor seem to be using an artificially-generated controversy. A vote against the Pillen resolution would help silence the ginned up outrage over an obscure theory rarely discussed in undergraduate education.

Finally, Regent Kenney, in the larger view my hope is that the university's curriculum in the areas of history, economics, law, and political science would continue to offer a broad and rich range of subjects that give a complete and clear-eyed view of the American story. That should include everything from our founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, which guide our civic principles to our nation's victories over facism and totalitarianism. Yet, earnest academic inquiry also requires us to study the role of race in everything from the Dred Scott decision to the delayed recognition of the Tuskegee Airmen to the real estate practice of redlining.

I hold an undergraduate and a graduate degree from UNL. I'm usually proud to say where they came from. Please don't cast a shadow on the education of thousands of University of Nebraska alums by supporting Pillen's wrongheaded plan to stifle serious scholarship for political gain.

Thank you for your time.

George Ayoub  
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