

Texas House of Representatives



Steve Toth

May 7, 2021

Dear Members,

Enclosed you will find a copy of *Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness* by Anastasia Higginbotham. This book was recommended to students by teachers in Highland Park Independent School District near Dallas. While the book's intended audience are children between 8 and 12 years old, upon further inspection you will discover a book wrought with bigotry, racial determinism, and open embrace of collective guilt.

This book has given rise to similarly discriminatory materials in classrooms along with bigotry laced curriculums of Critical Race Theory and the 1619 Project, and prompts me to direct your attention to a bill I filed this session: House Bill 3979, the Texas Education Equality Act.

House Bill 3979 seeks to resolve prejudice and bigotry in public teaching by proscribing hateful classroom activities and a racially discriminatory curriculum. My bill explicitly rejects the shameful notion that purports an individual's moral character or culpability are determined on the basis of skin color. Since 2010, suicide rates among kids age 10-14 has exploded from below 0.9 to 2 per hundred thousand. Race-shaming our kids, due to the color of their skin will only exacerbate a terrible situation. It's high time we recommit to fulfilling the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King by teaching our children that they ought to be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin. That journey begins in the home and in the classroom.

I hope you all will join me in co-authoring House Bill 3979. In closing, a special thanks is owed to Dick Weekley and Harlan Crow for their invaluable collaboration on House Bill 3979 and for generously providing each Member with a testament to the bill's necessity.

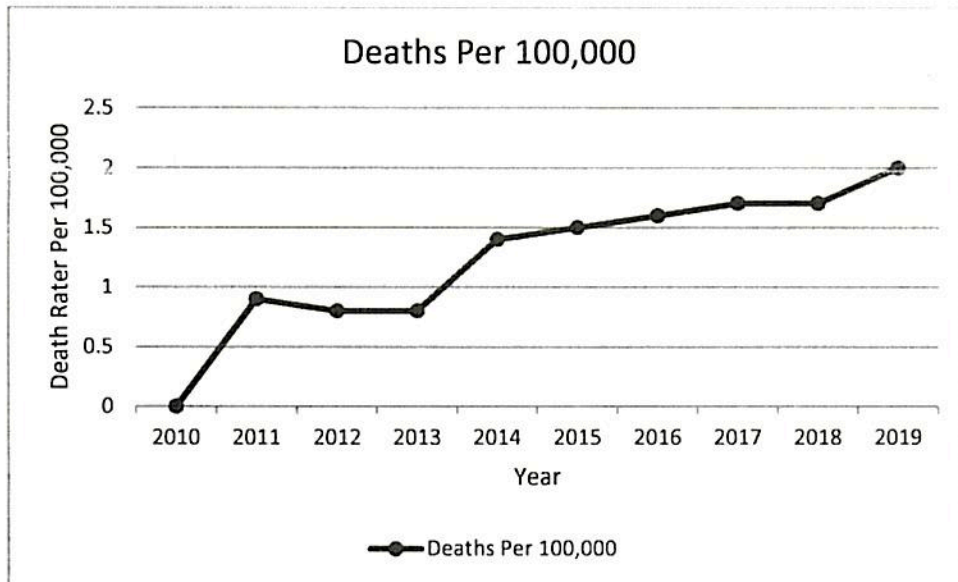
For Texas,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Toth".

Steve Toth
State Representative – HD 15

Enclosures: (1) Suicide Rate Chart (2) *Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness*

Suicide Rate Among Children Aged 10-14



Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db398-tables-508.pdf#page=2>
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db398.htm>

Not My Idea: A Book about Whiteness

Teachers in Highland Park Independent School District (near Dallas, Texas) recommended this book to some students. The book is written for children ages eight to twelve.

It is important to address racism and to have conversations with children about difficult topics. As the author notes, there is “a lot of listening and learning ahead of us.” (page 0)

While “understanding the truth takes courage,” (pg. 26) the following quotes are problematic:

- “Let’s dismantle white supremacy everywhere—especially in our own minds and bodies.” (page 0)
- ““White people have a very, very serious problem...”” (pg. 3)
- “[Skin color] makes a difference in how much trouble seems to find you or let you be.” (pg. 12-15)
- “Racism is a white person’s problem...” (pg. 23)
- “In the United States of America, white people have committed outrageous crimes against Black people for four hundred years.” (pg.33)
- “Whiteness is a bad deal. It always was.” (pg. 58)
- “Whiteness gets...your soul.” (pg. 59)