

## *Toward a Universal Suffrage and Iowa House File 802*

### Frequently Asked Questions

On June 8, 2021, Governor Kim Reynolds signed House File (HF) 802 “Providing for Requirements Related to Racism or Sexism and Inclusion Efforts By, Governmental Agencies and Entities, School Districts, and Public Postsecondary Educational Institutions” into law.

Based upon the Center’s reading of HF-802, the exhibit “Toward a Universal Suffrage” is compliant with HF-802 as it does not include any of the prohibited “specific defined concepts.” This FAQ is intended to help answer potential questions about the exhibit and HF-802. Institutions should continue to engage in their own independent review of the potential impact of HF-802 on their activities and programs.

#### **1. What are the “specific defined concepts” included in HF 802?**

As taken from the [legislation](#):

- That one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex.
- That the United States of American and the State of Iowa are fundamentally or systematically racist or sexist.
- That an individual, solely because of the individual’s race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously.
- That an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of the individual’s race or sex.
- That members of one race or sex cannot and should not attempt to treat others without respect to race or sex.
- That an individual’s moral character is necessarily determined by the individual’s race or sex.
- That an individual, by virtue of the individual’s race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committee in the past by other members of the same race or sex.
- That any individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish or any other forms of psychological distress on account of that individual’s race or sex.
- That meritocracy or traits such as a hard work ethic are racist or sexist, or were created by a particular race to oppress another race.
- Any other form of race or sex scapegoating or any other form of race or sex stereotyping.

#### **2. Does the exhibit “Toward a Universal Suffrage” include any of the “specific defined concepts” listed in the law?**

No. The exhibit does not discuss, teach, or promote any of the specific defined concepts.

#### **3. Does “Toward a Universal Suffrage” mention slavery?**

The exhibit mentions slavery in two contexts. First, the suffrage movement originated in the abolitionist movement. It mentions that two prominent abolitionists, Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, were also abolitionists. The exhibit profiles Charlotta Gordon Pyles, who escaped from slavery and worked to buy the freedom of some of her family members.

HF 802 specifically states that the legislation does not “prohibit the use of curriculum that teaches the topics of sexism, slavery, racial oppression, racial segregation, or racial discrimination....”

**4. Does “Toward a Universal Suffrage” discuss racial discrimination in voting rights history?**

Yes. The exhibit summarizes the gradual expansion of voting rights, the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and other milestones and the reasons these changes were necessary.

**5. Does “Toward a Universal Suffrage” explore whether some suffragists engaged in racist actions?**

The exhibit acknowledges that some white suffragists opposed expanding suffrage to African American women. At the same time, the exhibit notes that the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment enfranchised African American women in states that did not disenfranchise women of color for other reasons.