**What is critical race theory?**

Recently, education has become very political in America with a massive debate over whether critical race theory (CRT) should be taught in schools. It is not yet taught in schools.

Critical race theory is an academic concept, which began in the 1960’s, that departs from mainstream scholarship, arguing that raxce is a social construct, and that racism is embedded in legal systems and policies, not just coming from individual bias or prejudice.

A significant part of critical race theory also focuses on American history, claiming that from slavery to Jim Crow laws, America has had a very racist past. They challenge the narrative that the US has always been an equitable democracy. In their arguments here, CRT theorists are not solely blaming Whites for racism of the past. They assert that whites living now have a moral responsibility to take action against current racism.

When it comes to policies, it argues that policies which aim to improve race relations still have racially discriminatory outcomes. For example, it argues that whites have been the predominant beneficiaries of Civil Rights legislation.

An important part of critical race theory is intersectionality, the way that different forms of inequality and identity are affected by interconnections of race, gender, and disability.

**Why has CRT become such a hot topic recently?**

Recent protests over the unjust killing of African Americans, including George Floyd, Amhad Arrberry, and others, have prompted conversations about structural racism in the United States. At this time President Donald Trump began to fiercely oppose CRT, bashing it in an internal government memo and numerous interviews. His frequent use of the termm km caused the concept to sky-rocket and further amplified the Republican opposition.

So far, critical theory has been mainly taught in law schools. However, many schools are beginning to adopt in their curriculums especially in subjects like social studies or history. Teaching CRT in schools is proving to be significantly controversial and is sparking a lot of discussion in school boards.

The significance of CRT was seen very recently with the impact that it had on the elections in Virginia. It was the signature issue of the winning Republican candidate Glenn Youngkin. He announced that he would ban CRT as soon as he was elected.

**Support for Critical Race Theory**

Supporters of critical race theory emphasize its ability to help create a more equitable future. They feel that building this more equitable future requires an examination of how the shameful history of slavery and systemic racism, were foundational to the laws and insitutions that operate today.

They also feel that any bans on critical race theory are virtually banning truth and history, by hiding a true version of America and all of its racist elements. By banning simple discussion, supporters of CRT feel that these laws ban racial discourse and deny the country’s shameful legacy of racial oppression. Many go as far as to say that this amounts to an attack on free speech rights of Americans.

**Opposition to Critical Race Theory**

Many who oppose CRT claim that it is indoctrinating students in a harmful theory and political mindset. They argue that it makes students view everything through the lens of race. Youngkinn emphasized this in his campaign speeches.

“What we won’t do is teach our children to view everything through the lens of race,” Youngkinn said. “On day one, I will ban critical race theory.”

They also feel that it allows someone’s race to completely define them by determining numerous characteristics of a person. They do not like the way it does this by splitting people into two groups either victims or oppressors. In addition, they emphasize the perception that it values “lived experiences” of a person over facts.

Many also call it ‘anti-America,” claiming that it teaches students to dislike the country they live in by framing it as racist. They believe that it also labels American governments and capitalism as racist, which they feel will make

Numerous parents who oppose CRT have been expressing their opposition in school board meetings or hearings. With the controversy of the issue, there have been altercations between parents on different sides of the issue.

There are many parents who found themselves at a disconnect. A recent poll shows that 60% of American parents want their kids to learn about slavery and racism as part of their education. However, less than half of parents support the teaching of CRT, as many support the ability of schools to restrict teaching of CRT. The disconnect here shows a misunderstanding of the CRT by many parents, as the essence of CRT involves raising awarenes of slavery and racism throughout history.

**Future of Critical Race Theory in Schools**

As of today, The National School Boards Association and other education leaders are adamant that CRT is not being taught in K-12 schools, which teach students from five to 18 years old. With many states following their policies and banning the teaching of CRT, it is likely that it will not be implemented into school curriculums in the near future. The support that CRT is getting, is unlikely to change that. The chances of its implementation in schools also heavily depend on the opinions of teachers, which according to many surveys are mixed. The teachers’ opinions are divided across geographic regions in a similar way that the politics of the issue are.

The fierce Republican opposition toward it will continue, as it is presented in a way that provokes fear and enrages constituents of many Republican states. As a result, the viral videos of angry school board parents lambasting CRT will not go anywhere either. While this Republican discourse on CRT is ever-expanding Democratic discourse on the issue is subsiding. With the issue being so political, and being an important one heading into the 2022 midterms, expect it to remain a hot topic.