



A Civil Rights Community Response to Attacks on the Right of Students to Learn About Historical and Ongoing Racial Oppression in the United States

All students deserve access to an education that prepares them to succeed in college, career, and life and to fully exercise their social, political, and economic rights. Attempting to gag educators and whitewash the aspects of U.S. history that rightfully make people uncomfortable undermines that basic principle. For too long, we have denied Black, Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and Native students, LGBTQ students, women and girls, students with disabilities, religious minorities, and other marginalized people the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the story of our nation — both as builders and as those who were shut out. At the same time, we have too often denied White students the opportunity to learn about and grapple with the difficult reality that the work of building a United States that is as good as its ideals is unfinished.

Proponents of discrimination and exclusion — who seek to deny access to voting, housing, employment, and health care — have once again set their sights on education. Policymakers are attacking critical race theory, culturally responsive curricula, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. These attacks build on a history of criminalizing literacy for Black people, knowing the liberation that an education provides; practicing cultural genocide on Native communities by removing children from their homes; and punishing immigrants for speaking more than one language. The vocabulary has changed, but the agenda has not.

Because we have the advantage of knowing our history, we know that no lie can live forever; that right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant; and that you cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read. The determination to legislate ignorance, to prevent critical thinking, and to erase the complicated and difficult history of our nation will fail once again.

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
ADL (Anti-Defamation League)
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Atheists
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of Teachers
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Amnesty International USA
APIA Scholars
Arab American Institute (AAI)
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
Asian American Federation of Florida
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Asian Caribbean Exchange
Asian Culture And Education Society USA
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Children's Defense Fund
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Demos
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Education Law Center PA
Emgage Action
Family Equality
Feminist Majority Foundation
Florida Asian Services
Florida Asian Women Alliance
GLSEN
Hindu American Foundation
Hispanic Federation
Human Rights Campaign
IDRA (Intercultural Development Research Association)
Impact Fund
Indian Horizon of Florida
Japanese American Citizens League
Lambda Legal
Laotian American National Alliance
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of United Latin American Citizens
Matthew Shepard Foundation
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)
NAKASEC Virginia
Nation Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Action Network
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Human Rights Workers
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Youth Law
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Churches USA
National Council of Jewish Women
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

National Indian Education Association
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
OCA Asian Pacific Advocates - Greater Seattle
OCA Asian Pacific Islander American Advocates Utah Chapter
OCA Greater Chicago
OCA Greater Cleveland Chapter
OCA Silicon Valley
OCA South Florida Chapter
OCA-DFW
Organization of Chinese Americans, Central Virginia Chapter
PFLAG National
Poverty & Race Research Action Council
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)
Sikh Coalition
Southern Poverty Law Center
The Education Trust
The Leadership Conference Education Fund
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
UnidosUS
YWCA USA