

August 10, 2010

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
1511 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms. Johnson:

On behalf of our organizations and constituencies, we thank you for introducing H.Res.1593, a resolution supporting the adoption of social studies curriculum standards that are academically sound.

The politicization of the process by which curriculum standards are adopted in Texas has garnered national attention and has set a dangerous precedent that we fear could be repeated in other places. Therefore, we appreciate your efforts to draw attention to this problem. We agree that it should not be up to any politician to write history; instead teachers and experts in the field should be utilized to determine curriculum standards.

Some of the academically unsound and politically biased changes made by the Texas State Board of Education, resulting from the skewed process, are outside the mainstream of historic scholarship. For example, the Texas standards downplay the struggle leading up to and during the civil rights movement and undermine basic concepts of the constitutionally mandated boundaries between institutions of religion and government.

Your resolution supports social studies curriculum standards that allow students to be knowledgeable of our nation's diverse history and culture to ensure that all students' cultures, experiences, backgrounds, and histories are an integral part of what students learn in the classroom, just as they are an integral part of our nation as a whole.

We greatly appreciate your leadership on this important issue. Emphasizing that academic experts, rather than politicians, should develop curriculum standards that are clear, informed, and inclusive will help ensure that our students learn accurate history and acquire the analytical skills needed for success in college and the workforce.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Teachers
Americans for Religious Liberty
American Association of University Women
Americans United for Separation of Church and State
Anti-Defamation League
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
Catholics for Choice
Center for Inquiry
Hindu American Foundation
Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network
Interfaith Alliance

NAACP

National Alliance of Black School Educators

National Education Association

National Council of La Raza

National Council of Jewish Women

National Association of Secondary School Principals

People For the American Way

Secular Coalition for America

Texas Faith Network

Texas Freedom Network

United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries