

For Immediate Release

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American Historical Association Engages Controversies over US History Education

Washington, DC — Imagine the nation’s hospitals besieged by pressure to set aside most of what medical science has learned in the past half century. Individuals needing care would receive attention, but from physicians wary that implementing contemporary practices and ideas could have consequences for their careers. Public health would diminish even more.

This is the challenge faced by history educators in many states and school districts across the United States right now. Radical organizations, prompted and prodded by marketing professionals and political ideologues, are trying to convince legislatures, school boards, and parents that a half century of historical scholarship should be set aside: students learning about the importance of racism in American history is dangerous to civic culture, rather than necessary for healing.

Learning history is often uncomfortable. A recent [survey](#) conducted by the AHA and Fairleigh Dickinson University affirms that three-quarters of Americans—Republicans and Democrats—support the principle that history education should include harm that some have done to others even if it causes students discomfort. This is what history educators, with only rare exceptions, do in the classroom. The American Historical Association is proud of the professionalism of the nation’s teachers, and confident in the ability of our students to wrestle with challenging ideas.

The AHA’s new [Teaching History with Integrity](#) initiative promotes the principles and practices of historical work in the face of these challenges to educators. The initiative supports evidence-based, professional history through careful research on what is actually taught, short videos on the controversies over teaching histories of American racism, and informational materials for legislators and school boards. Visit the [AHA website](#) for these resources and more information.

Videos

“Teaching with Integrity: Historians Speak”

Historians describe how exploring America’s past honestly in the classroom benefits the nation’s students, and how the freedom to learn also strengthens our shared democracy. Speakers: Leonard Moore, Katharina Matro, Julia Brookins, Kathleen Hilliard, James Grossman, Hasan Kwame Jeffries, and James Sweet.

“Teaching with Integrity: Confronting a Nation's Past”

Katharina Matro, a high school social studies teacher who grew up in Germany, explains how consistent and open education about the Holocaust has shaped her own commitment to democracy and her love of country.

Founded in 1884 and incorporated by Congress in 1889 for the promotion of historical studies, the **American Historical Association** provides leadership for the discipline and promotes the critical role of historical thinking in public life. The Association defends academic freedom, develops professional standards, supports innovative scholarship and teaching, and helps to sustain and enhance the work of historians. As the largest membership association of professional historians in the world (nearly 12,000 members), the AHA serves historians in a wide variety of professions and represents every historical era and geographical area.

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