

August 25, 2021

Dear Texas legislators,

The American Historical Association opposes SB 3 and HB 28, introduced during the Texas legislature's special session. This proposed legislation threatens the integrity of history education in Texas.

We made clear our objections to HB 3979 in a [letter](#) to the governor and senate in May and in a [statement](#) issued in July. These newest bills only intensify the harm that this legislation does to Texas students and teachers. To deny Texas students the ability to discuss difficult themes in United States history is, as we stated in May, "to deny them their rightful place as citizens of the United States, and of the world." As our July statement declared, "Free and open inquiry is the hallmark of a democratic society. We deplore the effort of the Texas legislature to determine which historical subjects can and cannot be taught and learned." An additional 38 organizations, including several based in Texas, signed on to our July statement.

This affront to historical integrity does not originate in Texas, nor is it limited to that state. This legislation is part of a national campaign organized by radical organizations to deprive students of access to professional and accurate history education; the AHA, along with 149 other organizations, has condemned such legislation on a national basis. As our [joint statement](#) makes clear, these bills "risk infringing on the right of faculty to teach and of students to learn" and "seek to substitute political mandates for the considered judgment of professional educators, hindering students' ability to learn and engage in critical thinking across differences and disagreements."

The AHA urges the Texas legislature to reject these bills, both of which seek to indoctrinate students rather than help them learn the inquiry-based skills that will prepare them for their future civic and professional lives. Chartered by the United States Congress "for the promotion of historical studies" in the United States and representing the professional standards of history and the nearly 12,000 historians who are members of the Association, we leave you to ponder this: "A whitewashed view of history cannot change what happened in the past. A free and open society depends on the unrestricted pursuit and dissemination of knowledge."

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Jones
President



James Grossman
Executive Director