

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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September 20, 2016

Donna Bahorich, Chair
Texas State Board of Education
Texas Education Agency
William B. Travis State Office Building
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas, 78701
donna.bahorich@tea.texas.gov

Dear Chairperson Bahorich,

The American Historical Association expresses deep concern about the content of a recent draft of a textbook that has been submitted for approval for Texas's Mexican American Studies course. The AHA is a scholarly association that represents approximately 13,000 US and internationally based professors, secondary teachers, advanced students, and public historians, who conduct professional historical activities for all fields of the past and all periods.

A recent report issued by a committee, convened by a member of the Texas Board of Education as a part of a customary review process, cites numerous factual inaccuracies and generally poor historical work in *Mexican-American Heritage*, the textbook under consideration. Drawing on the AHA's [Guidelines for the Preparation, Evaluation, and Selection of History Textbooks](#) and the Association's [Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct](#) the committee also found a lack of "critical dialogue with current scholarship," which resulted in "a polemic attempting to masquerade as a textbook."

The committee, which includes AHA Teaching Division Councilor Trinidad Gonzales (South Texas Coll.) and association member Emilio Zamora (Univ. of Texas, Austin), presented its report after a thorough analysis of *Mexican-American Heritage* within the context of the breadth and depth of the abundant historical scholarship in this field.

We are also deeply disturbed by the process that resulted in the production of this textbook. The AHA remains unaware of any role played by professional historians in writing the text; apparently the publisher ruled out participation by scholars of Mexican descent because of concerns that they would be "biased" (quoting news reports).

This textbook does not adequately reflect the scholarship of historians who have worked in the field of Mexican American history, or measure up to the broad standards of history as a discipline. The American Historical Association urges the Texas Board of Education to take seriously the concerns expressed in the report and to reject the use of this textbook as an option for institutions within the purview of the board's adoption policies.

Sincerely,



James R. Grossman
Executive Director
American Historical Association

Cc: Thomas Ratliff, Vice Chair, Texas State Board of Education, thomas@thomasratliff.com
Ruben Cortez, Jr., Secretary, Texas State Board of Education, ruben.cortez@tea.texas.gov