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November 9, 2021

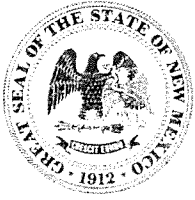
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House Republicans provide public comment on MLG's social studies curriculum changes

Santa Fe, NM – The NM House Republican Caucus today sent a letter to the Public Education Department providing commentary on opposition to the proposed changes to the state's social studies curriculum. This letter serves as an official record of the caucus' public comments on the controversial and rushed changes by the Lujan Grisham administration.

Letter is attached. Other public commentary can be submitted and viewed [here](#).

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State of New Mexico
House of Representatives
STATE CAPITOL
Santa Fe

November 9, 2021

Mr. John Sena
Policy Division
New Mexico Public Education Department
300 Don Gaspar Avenue, Room 121
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Mr. Sena:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the new proposed K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Standards that are currently undergoing a 45-day public comment period. Our opposition to these new proposed standards is based on our belief they incorporate the fundamentally flawed concepts of Critical Race Theory (CRT), plus they impose a progressive/liberal bias in regards to historical and societal events that are being mandated to be taught to New Mexico students. We, in turn, strongly urge the Public Education Department's (PED) leadership team to make substantial changes to these proposed standards in order to eliminate both of these highly objectionable aspects.

Social Studies education should be focused on teaching students why the U.S. and state constitutions are the pillars of our republic and how/why these documents are fundamental to fulfilling the American ideal that all people are created equal; how our governmental structures work and why governmental authority is dispersed among three separate, but co-equal branches; and how our free-enterprise system has resulted in a standard of living that is the envy of people across the globe and which provides a beacon of economic opportunity for all. It should not, however, be viewed as an opportunity to indoctrinate students with the false theology that our country is systemically racist, all things can be described in terms of oppressor and oppressed, or that our capitalistic system must be replaced with the paternalistic system of socialism.

Sadly, we believe these proposed K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Standards fail to teach students what has made America great, but instead has followed the path of various historical revisionists who only want to degrade and slander the greatest country on earth. Our country's history is not perfect in terms of economic and human rights, but that does not require altering Social Studies curriculums to embrace a highly distorted or biased view that the United States is dominated by white supremacists and racists. Rather than encouraging division and victimhood among our diverse populations, Social Studies curriculums should encourage students to realize we are all Americans and we all have opportunities for economic advancement based on the principles of family, education, and work.

At least 26 states have either adopted or are considering various policies/legislation that would restrict the teaching of CRT or limit how teachers can discuss racism and sexism. New Mexico should join these other 26 states in rejecting this Marxist inspired theology and not allow a rulemaking process (which is overseen by an unelected bureaucracy which is likely sympathetic to this ideology) which requires no

action by the State Legislature to supersede the will of the majority of New Mexicans who oppose the imposition of CRT-inspired theories upon our students.

We have objections to a significant number of the new proposed K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Standards, however, the specific items listed below are the most problematic and which demand PED's most careful review to ensure substantial changes or outright eliminations are made:

- In Ethnic, Cultural and Identity Studies --- Proposed 6.29.11.23(A)(1)(d) and 6.29.11.23(A)(3)(b): These standards require students to assess how social policies and economic forces "offer privilege or systemic inequity in accessing social, political, and economic opportunity..." and investigate how society should address "systemic inequity." Such language is classic CRT as it creates and perpetuates the false premise of so-called privilege and systemic inequity. Rather than teaching division and racism, these standards should focus on unity and establishing a shared commitment to the ideals of equality and opportunity. Further, we would suggest that the entire Ethnic, Cultural and Identity Studies curriculum be scraped and a completely new set of standards be drafted to ensure there is no CRT-inspired theology included in any way.
- For Kindergarten and Other Elementary Grades --- Proposed 6.29.11.8(F)(3)(a), 6.29.11.9(F)(4)(a), and 6.29.11.10(F)(4)(a): These standards encourage kindergarten, first grade and second grade students to "take action" to address local, regional and/or global problems. While this standard may have an altruistic intent, it could result in a situation where these young students are exploited for various political or public policy reasons by adults who want to create the impression their cause is so just that even elementary students support their idea. These young students are highly impressible and their "support" for any effort to address problems can easily be manipulated by teachers and others for their own political/policy benefit. Students who are five, six, or seven years old should never be placed in a situation where they would serve as props in a photo-op organized by activists. These standards should be eliminated.
- Throughout the entire Social Studies curriculum for grades K-8, there are "Anchor Standards" entitled "Ethnic, Cultural, and Identity Standards" which create a platform to focus on the differences, rather than the similarities, among various groups of people. It also provides an opportunity, such as in Proposed Standards 6.29.11.11(E)(2), 6.29.11.15(E)(7), and 6.29.11.15(E)(12), for a teacher to impose a singular notion of "justice and fairness," "unequal power relations," and "past and current injustices," although such terms are highly subjective and open to many interpretations. As with many aspects of these curriculum standards under the ethnic, cultural, and identity rubric, this area is rife with mandates that impose a certain set of values and beliefs that are not universally shared by all New Mexicans. Any attempts to lead students towards a specific value system should be completely eliminated from these standards as they can provide students with a biased understanding of complex events.
- High School U.S. History --- Proposed 6.29.11.21(A)(2)(b), 6.29.11.21(A)(2)(f), 6.29.11.21(A)(3)(d), and 6.29.11.21(A)(3)(e): Although the stated themes related to these standards are "U.S. Origins" and "Early America: The American Revolution and the Constitution," there are five specific standards whose primary focus is slavery, yet there are no standards on why America fought to gain its independence from England and only two standards regarding the crafting of the U.S. Constitution and its impact on the United States. This "preoccupation" with slavery during the formation of America is consistent with the false assertions of revisionist historians who claim America was founded on the principles of slavery, the so-called 1619 Project. This distorted and absurd assertion has no place in any high school history curriculum,

especially when the struggle for religious and economic liberties in early America, as well as why it was essential to extract America from the dictates of a foreign monarch are never considered within the context of these standards. There are numerous other standards within High School U.S. History [Proposed 6.29.11.21(A)(2)(k), 6.29.11.21(A)(3)(f), 6.29.11.21(A)(3)(g), and 6.29.11.21(A)(3)(h)] that echo this apparent obsession with slavery as the economic driving force during our nation's westward expansion. It is solely another effort to indoctrinate students with a radicalized social and political agenda.

- High School U.S. History --- Proposed 6.29.11.21(A)(1)(i): This standard calls on students to “evaluate what an efficient, equitable, and just economic system would look like in the U.S.” Such a requirement sounds eerily similar to the principles of CRT in terms of stressing “equity” and “just economic system.” Plus, who gets to define what these terms mean and what specific actions/steps satisfy whatever definition is utilized? Once again, rather than teaching students the principles embedded within our current capitalistic/free enterprise system, there is an obvious effort to encourage students to support some idealistic (socialism) economic system that may never be healthy for the country. This standard should be eliminated and replaced with a standard that provides students with a balanced discussion of the U.S. economic system.
- High School U.S. History --- Proposed 6.29.11.21(A)(3)(m), 6.29.11.21(A)(3)(z), and 6.29.11.21(A)(3)(ll): All of these standards relate to how gender and sexuality norms were changing during Reconstruction and the 1920s, as well as the activism and experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community during 1968 - 2008. We fail to comprehend the rationale for why high school students are required to learn about how gender and sexuality norms were changing during various historical periods and how is this perspective essential to a student's understanding of U.S. history during these two periods. In addition, why does every student have to examine the activities of the LGBTQIA+ community during a 40 year period? If individual students have an interest in LGBTQIA+ history, those students can conduct independent research in those related subjects. However, to require all students to do so, appears to be just another example of trying to mold students towards acceptance of a personal or social agenda that is highly controversial.
- High School U.S. History --- Proposed 6.29.11.21(A)(1)(gg): As we have shown above, these proposed K-12 Social Studies Standards are filled with examples of students being mandated to learn about a wide range of progressive/liberal ideals and agendas. Yet, maybe the most egregious example of this indoctrination is the standard which requires the examination of past, present, and future gun violence in the U.S. While understanding the relationship between crime and violence is a worthy subject of inquiry, it is not surprising this standard makes no reference to the constitutional rights afforded citizens to bear arms nor is there any discussion required as to how the proliferation of gangs, drug cartels, terrorist organizations, and other criminal enterprises have resulted in more gun violence within our society nor is there any requirement to help students understand that violence is perpetuated by individuals and not inanimate objects. This standard requires an extensive rewrite to ensure students are provided the “full story” on gun violence as noted above.

We assume proponents of these “reworked” proposed Social Studies standards will argue that CRT is not mentioned any place within these standards and that CRT concepts are not being imposed on New Mexico students. We would strongly disagree (as we pointed out in several bullet items listed above) and would respond that, of course, CRT is not explicitly mentioned within the standards as doing so would generate tremendous opposition from countless parents, taxpayers, administrators, and teachers

who are opposed to this radical ideology. Further, any explicit reference to CRT would most certainly doom these proposed standard from ever being approved and implemented. However, the continual and not-so-subtle inclusion of various words and phrases, such as “inequity,” “oppression,” “unequal power relations”, “racism,” and “injustice” are implicit admissions by the drafters of these proposed standards that CRT and it’s flawed vision of America is exactly what they are trying to impose through these Social Studies Standards.

Nonetheless, it is not just the CRT references we find objectionable, it is also the overall progressive/liberal slant or bias these standards are clearly designed to impart during the teaching of Social Studies in grades K-12. Within the proposed standards, there are numerous examples of classic progressive/liberal doctrine being promoted and all of these instances need to be either redrafted or eliminated to ensure New Mexico’s students are not subjected to a slanted view of our nation’s/state’s history and how our government and economic systems work. Specific examples include:

- Examine and evaluate the rules, laws, and authorities that keep people “safe” in New Mexico, but, of course, no mention of which rules, laws and authorities that keep New Mexicans “free.” [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.12(A)(1)]
- Describe how inequity in the U.S. laid the foundation for conflict that continues today. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.13(A)(3)(b)]
- Evaluate how society’s responses to different social identities lead to access and/or barriers for various demographic groups in relation to various societal institutions, including but limited to education, healthcare, government, and industry. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.15(E)(3)]
- Compare the patterns of exploration, destruction and occupation of the Americas by Spaniards. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.15(D)(3)(g)]
- Brainstorm ways in which New Mexicans might heal from past and current injustices. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.15(E)(8)]
- Examine how and why diverse groups have been denied equality and opportunity both institutionally and informally. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.16(F)(3)(f)]
- Describe how the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist organizations in the U.S. arose with the intention of maintaining the oppression of specific groups through informal institutions. Of course, no reference is made in any standard regarding the violence and intimidation provided by radical left groups like Antifa, Black Lives Matter, Weather Underground, The Earth Liberation Front, etc. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.16(D)(5)(c)]
- Demonstrate ability to use relevant historical evidence to synthesize information regarding the impact of nuclear weapons on people around the world. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.20(D)(2)(e)]
- Examine the short- and long-term effects of CIA involvement in Latin America, yet there is no requirement to explain to students how communist rule in Cuba has been negatively impacting that country for decades. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.21(A)(1)(x)]
- Examine the evolution of McCarthyism from the Red Scare to COINTELPRO. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.21(A)(1)(aa)]
- Explore the movement against police brutality. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.21(A)(3)(kk)]
- Create an action plan for a more just and equitable America for diverse groups of people including Native Americans and African Americans. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.21(A)(3)(mm)]
- Analyze US government policies to reduce climate disruption. [Proposed Standard 6.29.11.21(A)(4)(t)]

We believe the proposed K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Standard, in their current form, fail to provide students with a clear and balanced understanding of why the United States of America and the State of New Mexico should be admired for its many positive attributes. Therefore, we strongly urge PED's leadership to make substantial revisions to the proposed K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Standards to ensure our students are provided an opportunity to not only learn the fundamental principles on which our republic was founded, but also gain a respectful appreciation of our country's political and economic systems.

We also concur with the request being made by numerous New Mexico public school districts that the public comment period related to these proposed standards be extended to July 1, 2022 in order to give parents, educators, and other interested citizens sufficient time to review and comprehend the many detailed standards contained in this proposal.

Finally, we also strongly encourage PED to submit these proposed standards to the State Legislature for formal hearings to further expand awareness throughout New Mexico as to what and how students will be taught Social Studies in the years ahead.

Thank you for giving our concerns, comments, and suggestions your most serious consideration.

Respectfully yours,



James G. Townsend
House Republican Leader



Rod Montoya
House Republican Whip



Rebecca Dow
Caucus Chair



Randall S. Crowder
State Representative HD 64



Alonzo Baldonado
State Representative HD 8



Ryan T. Lane
State Representative HD 3



Candy Spence Ezzell
State Representative HD 58



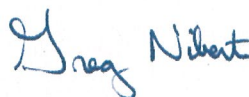
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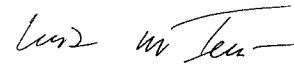
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Stefani Lord
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Kelly K. Fajardo
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Luis M. Terrazas
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Zachary J. Cook
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