



NAACP DeKalb's Position Paper on Georgia's HB 1084

Approved by NAACP DeKalb's Executive Committee February 20, 2023

NAACP DeKalb presented a panel discussion consisting of teachers, students, activists, lawyers, and legislators at its Black History Month Program on February 4, 2023. The discussion centered around the attack on Black History in Georgia and nationally. Governor Brian Kemp signed HB 1084 in 2022 which limits what can be said about race in the classroom. This legislation, which the Governor called "Protect Students First" is a part of a national movement of anti-Critical Race Theory (CRT) laws to ban any discussions of racial inequality, diversity, and most importantly, to ban the truth about America's history on race and the impact of that true history on today. HB 1084 and/or the anti-CRT movement has led to broader consequences including banning books from school libraries.

Position

Along with NAACP's Legal Defense Fund (LDF), NAACP DeKalb is opposed to any law, including Georgia HB 1084, which seeks to white-wash history, to rewrite history, to restrict the teaching of the truth of our history and to punish teachers for teaching true history. Our true history is under attack!

What Can We Do

President Hammonds encourages all parents and people in DeKalb County interested in the teaching of our true history to our children to do the following:

- Thank teachers who resist following the tenets of HB 1084 (also known as Georgia's anti-CRT law) and instead teach the truth of American history.
- Insist that educators teach the truth.
- Attend PTA and Board of Education meetings and SPEAK OUT!
- Contact your Legislators and push for the repeal of HB 1084.

History

Soon after Nikole Hannah-Jones's book, The 1619 Project, was published in 2019, then President Trump issued an Executive Order directing all federal agencies and the military to end trainings related to racial inequality and diversity, CRT or other forms of what he called "propaganda." (A federal judge blocked the order and the Biden Administration has rescinded the order.) More than 30 states have since introduced or passed laws that mirror the Trump order. In 2020, police killed Breonna Taylor and George Floyd in separate incidents. Just as Black people were beginning to recognize the history of systemic racism and its ongoing impact, states responded by passing anti-CRT laws to silence discussion of racial inequality.

What is CRT (Critical Race Theory)

CRT is a misnomer used by conservative Republicans as a catch-all and rallying cry to silence any discussions about systemic racism, to ban the truthful teaching of American history, especially in K-12, and to reverse programs toward racial justice. Attempts to ban CRT (also known as anti-CRT) are attacks on discussions in schools about the truthful history of race and racism in America and the lived experiences of Black people. These laws are aimed at Black people!

Briefly, CRT is an examination of how the shameful history of slavery and systemic racism are foundations for today's laws and institutions. CRT is not taught in K-12.

Common Elements of anti-CRT laws, including Georgia's HB 1084

- Bans any discussion or teaching that America is inherently or fundamentally racist.
- Bans "divisive concepts" which includes any discussions about white supremacy, white privilege, racial terrorism, and/or systemic bias or racism. Definitions are lacking leaving teachers unclear as to what they can and cannot say or teach. Therefore, teachers tend to err on the side of job-safety and avoid discussing these concepts altogether, a form of self-censorship.
- Bans discussions of systemic racism that would "discriminate", cause "hurt feelings", or make someone "feel guilty" about their race. This does not apply to teaching Black children the White version of the "happy slaves" during slavery.
- Requires teachers to teach history "without giving deference to any one perspective." Note that in Georgia, schools are required to teach Georgia History. Under this ban, the topic of slavery in Georgia cannot be approached unless it is whitewashed.
- Contains provisions allowing for the discipline of teachers if a parent or anyone else complains. This is intimidating and teachers have been fired.
- Allows the state to withhold funding for schools that violate the bans.

Lawsuits

NAACP's LDF has challenged the laws based on the issue of Freedom of Speech and teacher disciplinary actions on the bases of lack of due process. The Georgia Association of Educators has notified Georgia it will sue the state over HB 1084 due to its vagueness among other things.

Conclusion

Georgia's HB 1084 is a detriment to White students because it hides those unpleasant truths of what some of their forefathers have done. This prevents the White students from facing true history and how it has impacted their lives. It even prevents them from honoring their heroic ancestors who may have been abolitionists. Current history teaches manifest destiny because of how America has expanded. It omits the death and destruction of other cultures caused by white expansionism. This hiding of history's truth has led to a false narrative. False narratives are detrimental to any hope of healing and reconciliation.

HB 1084 is an attack on Black people, Black history and Black experiences. It seeks to keep Black children ignorant of their true history. It seeks to rewrite the truth. Even in predominantly Black schools only the white version of history can be taught. Young people, Black and White, see what's going on and wonder why they are not allowed to be taught the truth. The law puts the burden on students to learn the truth. This is a form of child abuse that we must fight!

For Comments or Contact

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