

A Statement from 904WARD on AP African American History Rejection

Last week, the governor and commissioner of education rejected Advanced Placement African American History in Florida. The governor's attempts to trivialize Black communities' histories is appalling. If we are honest with ourselves, these are no longer attempts but successes to suppress America's history and keep our young people from learning about the nuances of our collective story. This administration distracts the public by using demonizing language and policies to decimate the legitimacy of people's lived experiences in this country to cater to a very loud minority and water down public education. Our governor and his administration are undermining teachers, principals, curriculum developers, school boards, superintendents, and countless parents who want their children to be exposed to true American history.

Those paying close attention to history understand that this hijacking of public education to avoid indoctrination looks eerily similar to anti-Semitic tactics used in Nazi Germany, where indoctrination took place with horrific consequences. Or the fact that enslaved Africans could not be taught to read. The education system is a powerful institution. The great Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who we celebrated a short week ago, said, "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education." This administration seems to value feelings and votes more than critical and intensive thinking.

If the goal was truly to enforce the HB7 Individual Freedoms bill, also dubbed the Stop WOKE Act, then the governor should be supportive right now as the bill requires the teaching of African-American history. His rejection reflects the true intention of this law and his actions - to erase our history, hide our failings and mistakes, and promote a raceless society while doing nothing to address the issues and systems that give weight to race in the first place. Hiding from our truth does not make it go away. Lying about our truth does not make it any less real. Dismissing our truth does not protect anyone, especially not our children.

If the curriculum has areas of concern to address, by all means, critique it. Work with the professionals to strengthen it. Provide material evidence of what is lacking so that improvements can be made. However, to say it "lacks educational value" is the equivalent of



40 East Adams Street, Ste. 34
Jacksonville, FL. 32202



www.904ward.org



info@904ward.org



904WARD



@904WARD

saying Black History doesn't matter. We cannot tell the story of this country without also telling the stories of Black Americans.

Let's not leave this moment simply outraged. Let's meet this moment with action. Here are three things you can do today to respond:

1. Call the governor's office to express your feelings about this and any other issues at (850) 717-9337. You should also call the State Education Commissioner at 850-245-0505 or email him at Commissioner@fldoe.org. Remember, although they are the governor and education commissioner, they are still your employees even if you did not vote for them. Get to know your employees and what they can and should do for you: <https://904ward.org/advocacy/>
2. Provide supplemental Black history lesson for the young people in your life by visiting places such as <https://reconstruction.us/home> .
3. Educate yourselves about the lived experiences of marginalized people in this country. Check out our resources pages and contact us about how you can donate books for children to ensure they learn about all aspects of our history for our Little Free Diverse Libraries.



40 East Adams Street, Ste. 34
Jacksonville, FL. 32202



www.904ward.org



info@904ward.org



904WARD



@904WARD