

Learn from History

Why we exist

Racism played a significant role in our past and, sadly, it continues to be widespread and harmful to us all.

To enable students to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, succeed in diverse workplaces, and create a better society, schools have a responsibility to provide a thorough, accurate, and fact-based history education and teach students to reject racism and respect the equal value of every person.

A broad bipartisan majority of Americans want schools to teach more about racism as part of American history lessons, and schools increasingly are doing just that.

We cannot afford to ignore the rampant spread of misinformation about what is being taught in classrooms. Nor can we permit that misinformation to force teachers to go back to brushing past difficult parts of our history or omitting them entirely, ban students from learning racism is wrong, and add yet another stressor for teachers.

This unnecessary upheaval comes at the worst possible time, as educators are working tirelessly to provide the best possible education and support for students recovering from a tumultuous and chaotic year.

If this continues, not only will students be deprived of crucial knowledge, but an already severe teacher shortage could get even worse.

Our Goals

- Educate parents and the public about what is actually taught in schools,
- Explain the vital importance of students learning thorough, accurate, and fact-based history and that racism is wrong, and
- Dramatize in an authentic, non-political, non-confrontational way through first person accounts the harm and cost of efforts to restrict what is taught in classrooms across the country.

The Coalition's messengers will be educators, parents, students, business owners, and faith leaders, not leaders of national organizations.

The Learn from History Coalition is apolitical and will not engage in any lobbying or advocacy. It is solely focused on facilitating broad-based, effective communication to shift the imbalanced and detrimental current narrative.

Please join us

We welcome and encourage every organization with aligned values and goals to join the Learn from History Coalition. Please email Jennifer Warner at jwarner@LearnfromHistory.org today to join the coalition or learn more.

Inaugural
Coalition Partners:



¹ <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/axios-education-inequity-2020>

What is expected from organizations that participate in the Learn from History Coalition?

- 1 Designate a key contact.
- 2 Advise on strategic direction on an ongoing basis.
- 3 Participate in the launch and other coalition activities.
- 4 Share important information with your members/supporters.
- 5 Enlist other aligned organizations and individuals, if possible.

** Participation in the Learn from History Coalition does not preclude other organizational activities on this topic.

Additional Information

AMERICANS AGREE WITH LEARN FROM HISTORY'S CORE BELIEFS

Extensive recent survey research confirms a broad bipartisan majority of Americans:

- Want students to learn a thorough, accurate, and fact-based account of American history.
- Trust teachers to thoughtfully teach the hard parts of history.
- Believe racism is widespread and harmful to society and that schools have a responsibility to teach students that racism is wrong.
- Want to reduce political division and rancor.

A NATIONAL PUSH FOR HARMFUL RESTRICTIONS IS GROWING

At the state and school board level, harmful and chaos-creating efforts to censor teachers, ban lessons about racism, and force schools to brush past the more painful parts of our history are spreading:

- A Texas bill seeks to remove requirements to teach about slavery, the Ku Klux Klan, Native American history, and the writings of Martin Luther King Jr., Susan B. Anthony, and Frederick Douglass.
- In Louisiana and Ohio, vaguely worded bills sought to censor teachers from discussing “divisive concepts,” which could include any aspect of U.S. history related to race.
- A copycat Tennessee law threatens schools that teach so-called “divisive concepts” with a loss of state funding.
- A Pennsylvania bill would authorize any resident and financially incentivize attorneys to sue schools and teachers for teaching about “divisive concepts.”
- In Montana, the Attorney General urged parents to sue schools they believe are teaching antiracism.

These sweeping and unclear restrictions have left teachers fearful and concerned for their students and their careers. For many valuable veteran teachers, this could be the last straw that causes them to exit the profession.

IT'S TIME FOR AMERICANS OF GOODWILL TO STAND TOGETHER

The misinformation about what is being taught in our schools is dangerous and requires a concerted response. The time is now for Americans committed to healing our nation's divisions, equipping the next generation to create a better future, and supporting our teachers and students to stand together.

Key Points to Communicate

- 1 Schools have a responsibility to provide students with a thorough, truthful, and fact-based history education and help students learn that racism is wrong.** Racism continues to be widespread and harmful to our society. Misinformation is rampant and divisions are deep. To equip students to avoid repeating mistakes of the past, succeed in diverse workplaces, and create a better and more cohesive society, schools have a responsibility to provide an accurate, truthful, and fact-based history education, including important overlooked parts, and to teach students that racism is wrong.
- 2 Schools are increasingly fulfilling that important responsibility.** Providing an accurate, truthful, and fact-based history education isn't easy. Nor is teaching students about racism. To their credit, by and large, teachers are doing it thoughtfully and with care.
- 3 Rampant misinformation about what is being taught in classrooms is fueling efforts across the country to force teachers to go back to brushing past difficult parts of our history or omitting them entirely and ban students from learning racism is wrong.**
- 4 This is wrong, and it could not be happening at a worse time.** Educators in several states are not only afraid of being fired, sued, or charged with a crime for teaching the truth, they are increasingly being harassed on social media, and some have even received death threats. If this continues, not only will students be deprived of crucial knowledge, but an already severe teacher shortage will get worse, resulting in even bigger class sizes and more students in classrooms led by unqualified substitutes.

Answers to a Few Frequently Asked Questions

These responses to frequently asked questions may be helpful:

Do you, or your school, teach critical race theory?

No. We provide students with a thorough, accurate, and fact-based account of American history, in ways that are age-appropriate, and teach our students that racism is wrong.

Do you oppose efforts to ban critical race theory or teaching of “divisive concepts”?

Yes, because the vaguely worded bans actually censor teachers, prevent thorough, accurate, and fact-based history instruction, and ban lessons that help students learn that racism is wrong.

Why, suddenly, are people so up in arms?

Because of misinformation and inflammatory

and inaccurate labels being spread online about what is being taught in schools, which in almost every case bears no relationship to what is actually being taught, how teachers are teaching, and what students themselves want to learn.

I strongly support schools providing a thorough and accurate history education and teaching that racism is wrong and am deeply disturbed by what is happening. Is there anything I can do?

Yes! You can use your voice and encourage people you know to speak up as well. Remember, we are in the broad majority here. For the sake of students, teachers, and the future, we cannot remain silent.

Email Jennifer Warner at jwarner@LearnFromHistory.org for more information or to join the Learn from History coalition.