

To the Members of the Texas State Board of Education

I want to thank each of you for your service to our State while at the same time I must request that you engage in serious revision to the proposals you are considering, especially those regarding social studies. Here are some observations I have in regards to what is being proposed:

1. It appears that there is a desire to not have an honest discussion of American and its history of race. There appears to be a desire not to address the issue of slavery directly and it appears that African-Americans are an after thought. It seems that in the majority of instances when you identify different races or cultures of ethnic groups under a specific topic the examples that are given do not include African-Americans. Of course one could read the broader language and expect that we would be honestly included but I think with our history in this state nothing should be left to be questioned. Further, in discussing the issue or minorities or race it is important that these matters be discussed honestly. Though some may have good intentions (and others bad) in making recommendations that put a smiling face on slavery, Jim Crow, ethnocentrism and racism, we know that the truth is completely different and the only way we can avoid a repeat of the past is to have a reminder of the future. The Jewish experience with the Holocaust provides a great example, because they have understood the value of the reminder regarding what happened in the past to help ensure a better future. In our nation I feel that racism is on the rise again as evidenced by the incredible increase in numbers of both hate groups and members of hate groups as evidenced by the Southern Poverty Law Center. We do not know what the future holds, but it is extremely important that this issue be discussed honestly to help ensure that to the extent possible we can stem the tide of the rise in racism. We can look no further than our current Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court, the Honorable Wallace Jefferson, and see how it is important and instructive to be reminded of the past. The Chief Justice mentioned in his acceptance of the appointment from Governor Perry and in many other speeches I have seen him give that he is the descendent of slaves from the Waco area. Recognizing our past in its true light does not have a political hure.
2. It appears that there is a desire to case the flags that flew over Texas in a positive light. Now of course the popular Confederate Battle Flag never

- did, but even the official Flag of the Confederacy should not be taught in any way to celebrate the Confederacy. Though we recognize and respect the right of others to feel good about the Confederacy, it is our opinion that any promotion of it will cause serious psychological and emotional harm to many young children and this is unnecessary. The Texas Declaration of Causes makes it clear that the participation of Texas in the Civil War was to ensure the continuation of white supremacy.
3. Though Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez and Colin Powell are mentioned there is no mention of Thurgood Marshall. We have to note that at one point in our history African-Americans could not vote in the Democratic Party primary. Thurgood Marshall caused that to change. At one point African-Americans could not attend the University of Texas and Thurgood Marshall changed that. And it was the decision in Brown II, also a Marshall case, that led to the desegregation of undergraduate education at the University of Texas and Texas A & M. And when the State sought to shut down the NAACP in Texas, it stepped Thurgood Marshall. So you can see he had a great impact on our State. Also, it is important to note that both LULAC and the NAACP in general have had major impacts in our State and that history regarding them should be taught. The white head of the NAACP, John Shillady, was beaten profusely in broad daylight in downtown Austin after a meeting with the Texas Attorney General. But the organization persisted to protect our membership lists from a hostile government at that time. We fought the Texas Democratic Primary in the 1920's and won but had to fight it again in the 1940's. We fought lynch mobs all around the State and had to hide many of our State leaders and even Thurgood Marshall when he would come to our state. It is because of efforts of the NAACP and other like minded organizations like LULAC and well intentioned people of all races that we were able to change our State where African-Americans were no longer educated by one teacher for all grades because of segregation, where African-Americans could attend Texas' best colleges which were already receiving their tax monies, where African-Americans could have state jobs, be members of the Legislature or sit on the Texas Supreme Court. You can trace all of those things back to the NAACP and our good friends of all races and political parties. This is a matter of historical fact. We will provide any of you who desire an article about the Texas NAACP in Texas by a Thurgood Marshall School of Law Professor if you desire to further illustrate the points that we are making here.

In summary we would propose that you seek some appropriate method of having real input into this process beyond a public meeting so that we can come up with something that makes it work for all of us. Today we are competing against the emerging nations and even against a changing Global Economy, so we must do all

that we can as Americans to come together and put ourselves in a position to continue and lead the world. Our position is in jeopardy with many changes over the last decade or two and we have to take note of that. We hold the greatest promise of any other because of the way we may potentially handle diversity, so let's make sure that we educate our students with all facts and not just convenient ones. Let us make our State the envy of the nation and not one that seems mired in quicksand and unable to lead and move forward. Truth is the light.