



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 21, 2010

Civil Rights' Groups Contest New Texas Curriculum

In March of this year, the Texas Board of Education approved a social studies curriculum that touts more conservative principles, including those championing the superiority of American capitalism and the spirituality of the Founding Fathers. The vote was 10 to 5. Predictably, two civil rights organizations are now seeking a federal review of public school education in Texas, claiming that the curriculum approved by the Texas Board of Education violates federal civil rights laws.



[Fox News](#) writes:

The request to the U.S. Department of Education made by the Texas NAACP and Texas League of United Latin American Citizens on Monday contended that the curriculum changes passed in May "were made with the intention to discriminate" and would have a "stigmatizing impact" on African-American and Latino students....

[S]igned by Gary Bledsoe, president of the state NAACP, and Joey D. Cardenas Jr., state director of Texas LULAC, the request asks that the Department of Education stop the implementation of the new standards, which the groups assert to be "ethnically offensive."

However, the assertions made by the two civil rights groups could not be further from the truth. On Glenn Beck's Founders Fridays' episode that celebrated the role of [African-Americans in America's founding](#), David Barton, founder of Wallbuilders and one of the writers of the new Texas curriculum, taught about a number of black Founders who have been virtually left out of history textbooks. On that episode, Barton declared, "Every one of these black guys we just mentioned would now be back in the Texas textbooks."

He added, "The last standards done are 12 years old, of which 11 percent of the names mentioned in the textbook were non-white. The ones we just did are not up to 25 percent."

How do Barton's assertions reconcile with those made by the civil rights groups? They don't. However, for groups that profit from the victimization of minorities, such positive changes as increasing the mention of minorities in the curriculum is counterproductive to what the civil rights groups are trying to achieve: a permanent divide.

Likewise, the Texas curriculum is particularly problematic for the Texas NAACP and Texas League of United Latin American Citizens, as it teaches that minorities played a significant role in the founding of this great nation. That means that exploitative civil rights groups can no longer assert that America belongs solely to white Americans.

David Barton [explains](#) the inspiration for the changes made to the Texas curriculum:

The curriculum emphasizes individuals, not groups. I think that's a real positive thing for kids not to feel like they have to be a part of identity politics, that they have to belong to some group or



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have to be identified by some group. We want them to be identified as Americans.

Ay, there's the rub! How can civil rights groups possibly remain useful without divisiveness? If people began to identify themselves as Americans instead of as blacks, whites, Hispanics, handicapped, homosexual, heterosexual, etc., civil rights groups would likely fade into history. Oh the humanity!

The end result of the Texas curriculum, according to Barton, is as follows:

You should present history as it happened — the good, the bad, the ugly; the right, the left, the center; the anything else that it out there. And I think that's the final product that we got, despite all the media clamor to the otherwise. When you just read the standards, they're extremely balanced, extremely fair, and extremely thorough.

Furthermore, the curriculum emphasizes American exceptionalism:

[Students] will have to spend a week every year on 12 grade levels studying the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration [of Independence]; and memorizing lengthy segments from those documents. There is a reason that we're the only nation in the world that does not average a revolution every 30 to 40 years; there's a reason that we have four percent of the world's population and 25 percent of the world's wealth.

However, the civil rights groups contend, "The State of Texas is failing to provide many of its minority students with equal educational opportunities."

Bledsoe and Cardenas wrote in their filing, "It is our contention that the school board curriculum changes were made with the intention to discriminate."

The groups are requesting a federal review of the curriculum as well as of the state's assessment tests that allegedly "do not adequately test for all relevant and important educational information [and] disproportionately fail minority students and ultimately are important factors in causing large numbers of minority students to drop out of Texas public schools."

However, the groups' assessment of minority dropout rates fails to consider [other factors](#) that studies have proven to impact dropout rates, including parental demographics, extracurricular activity participation, and failing course grades (not assessment test grades).

In addition to the curriculum complaint, the groups cite the "miseducation of minority students, disparate discipline for minority students, using accountability standards to impose sanctions on schools with high numbers of minority students and rules leading to underrepresentation of minorities in gifted and talented school programs," Fox News writes.

The groups warn that the request for a federal review is the prerequisite to a potential lawsuit.

Photo: The main offices of the Texas Education Agency in the William B. Travis State Office Building in Downtown Austin



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