

approved by unanimous  
Consent



STUDENT GOVERNMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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**Finalized version as passed on the floor**

**AR 5: In Support of Efforts to Reform the Texas State Board of Education**

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**Sponsors:** Representatives Jeremy Yager, Natalie Butler, Nicole Bartel, Philip Wiseman, Bernadette De La Cruz, Janette Martinez, Matt Daley, Marc Anthony Gonzalez, John Woods, John Lawler, Jesse Hernandez

Section I: Overview

**WHEREAS**, The Texas State Board of Education (SBOE), as defined by the Texas Education Code<sup>i</sup>, is an elected body which is tasked with establishing statewide curriculum standards for public schools, reviewing and adopting proposed textbook purchases of local school districts and ensuring that said texts comply with the aforementioned standards, setting graduation requirements, and determining standards of performance for state-mandated assessment tests, among other responsibilities; and,

**WHEREAS**, The Board's newly proposed social studies curriculum is widely opposed by educational experts<sup>ii</sup>, including a contingent of professors from the University of Texas at Austin<sup>iii</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS**, As Texas represents one of the largest textbook markets in the United States, changes to its public school curriculum are reflected in textbooks manufactured nationwide, meaning that the adoption of new curriculum standards will thus impact students both in Texas and many other states around the nation<sup>iv</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS**, The aforementioned curriculum revisions will affect the education of the majority of children in Texas, in addition to that of students nationwide who will study textbooks manufactured to conform to these standards<sup>v</sup>, and will thus directly impact future students who wish to attend The University of Texas at Austin; and,

**WHEREAS**, The aforementioned curriculum revisions will affect current students at the University of Texas at Austin who will soon seek employment in public education and will be asked to conform to these standards; and,

Section II: The Current Social Studies Curriculum Proposal

**WHEREAS**, The representation of minority groups in education would be reduced, notably via the removal of prominent community leaders such as Oscar Romero and Dolores Huerta<sup>vi</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS**, The aforementioned curriculum would stand in opposition to the core values of The University of Texas at Austin, notably via the removal of concepts of "justice" and "responsibility for the common good" from a list of aspects of good citizenship for Grades 1-3<sup>vii</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS**, The new curriculum would censor various foundational aspects of American political thought, notably via the rejection of a standard which would have required high school students to "examine the reasons the Founding Fathers protected religious freedom in America by barring government from promoting or disfavoring any particular religion over all others,"<sup>viii</sup> and,

**WHEREAS**, The changes proposed by the State Board of Education were arrived at by a panel chosen in partisan elections and with no required educational expertise<sup>ix</sup>, while subject matter experts were often not consulted in the drafting of amendments relevant to their respective fields<sup>x</sup>; and,



### Section III: Shortcomings of Texas Public Education

**WHEREAS**, Texas received an overall grade of C+ in *Education Week's* annual academic report card, including C grades in K-12 achievement and "chance for success"<sup>x</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS**, Public schools in Texas inadequately prepare students to compete with graduates from other states in the college admissions process, as the state ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation in average verbal SAT scores (493) and 46<sup>th</sup> in math SAT scores (502)<sup>xi</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS**, In 2007, as per Texas assessment standards determined by the State Board of Education, a vast majority of Texas 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students met the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills' reading and math benchmarks, though a very low percentage of 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students scored "At or Above Proficiency" in reading and math as determined by the National Assessment of Educational Progress<sup>xii</sup>; and,

### Section IV: Efforts to Reform the Texas State Board of Education

**WHEREAS**, Numerous attempts were made during the 81<sup>st</sup> session of the Texas legislature to reform the State Board of Education, among them bills that would have transferred authority for textbook adoptions and curriculum approval from the SBOE to the Texas Education Agency<sup>xiii</sup>, placed the SBOE under periodic review of the Sunset Advisory Commission<sup>xiv</sup>, and made SBOE elections nonpartisan<sup>xv</sup>; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin strongly opposes the social studies curriculum revision proposed by the Texas State Board of Education, and any future standards which place greater emphasis upon interests other than providing a strong education to Texas children, and believes that such revisions will severely diminish the ability of students and educators in Texas to succeed; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin calls for the State Board of Education to seriously consider the complaints of its constituents, and should it fail to, calls for Texas Governor Rick Perry to urge its Chair, Gail Lowe, to send proposed social studies curriculum changes back to the educational experts that drafted the original standards for further recommendations, and to heed these suggestions; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin endorses the efforts of Texas legislators and groups such as Save Our History, a coalition of student organizations from The University of Texas at Austin, to reform the State Board of Education; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Office of the Governor of Texas, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Texas, the Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, the Office of Texas State Board of Education, the Office of the President, and the Office of Governmental Relations.

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i "EDUCATION CODE CHAPTER 7. STATE ORGANIZATION." *Texas Constitution and Statutes*. State of Texas, 17 Mar 2010. Web. 11 Apr 2010. <<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.7.htm>>.

ii Birnbaum, Michael. "Historians speak out against proposed Texas textbook changes." *Washington Post* 18 Mar 2010: n.pag. Web. 11 Apr 2010. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2010/03/17/AR2010031700560.html>>.

iii "Texas educators want State Board of Education to delay curriculum vote." *Dallas Morning News* 15 Apr 2010: n. pag. Web. 19 Apr 2010. <<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/education/stories/041610dntexsboe.2167678.html>>.

iv Shorto, Russell. "How Christian Were the Founders?." *New York Times Magazine* 11 Feb 2010: n. pag. Web. 11 Apr 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/14/magazine/14texbooks-t.html>>.

v Shorto, Russell. "How Christian Were the Founders?." *New York Times Magazine* 11 Feb 2010: n. pag. Web. 11 Apr 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/14/magazine/14texbooks-t.html>>.

vi "Proposed Revisions to 19 TAC Chapter 113, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies, Subchapter A, Elementary." *Texas Education Agency*. Texas Education Agency, 15 Apr 2010. Web. 19 Apr 2010. <[http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/teks/social/ELEM\\_TEKS\\_1stRdg.pdf](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/teks/social/ELEM_TEKS_1stRdg.pdf)>.

vii "The List of Shame in Texas." *TFN Insider*. Texas Freedom Network, 11 Apr 2010. Web. 11 Apr 2010. <<http://tfninsider.org/2010/03/13/the-list-of-shame-in-texas/>>.

viii Blake, Mariah. "Revisionaries: How a Group of Texas Conservatives is Rewriting Your Kids' Textbooks.." *Washington Monthly* Jan 2010: n. pag. Web. 11 Apr 2010. <<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2010/1001.blake.html>>.

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IX "The List of Shame in Texas." *TFN Insider*. Texas Freedom Network, 11 Apr 2010. Web. 11 Apr 2010.  
<<http://tfninsider.org/2010/03/13/the-list-of-shame-in-texas/>>.

X "Quality Counts 2010 - State Report Cards." *Education Week*. Education Week, 11 Apr 2010. Web. 11 Apr 2010.  
<<http://www.edweek.org/ew/qc/2010/17src.h29.html>>.

XI "Texas Where We Stand: Education." *Susan Combs - Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts*. State of Texas, 04 Apr 2010. Web. 11 Apr 2010. <<http://www.window.state.tx.us/comptrol/wwstand/wws0512ed/>>.

XII "Public Education - Texas in Focus." *Susan Combs - Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts*. State of Texas, 11 Apr 2010. Web. 11 Apr 2010. <<http://www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/tif/public.html>>.

XIII "81(R) History for SB 440." *Texas Legislature Online*. State of Texas, 11 Apr 2010. Web. 11 Apr 2010.  
<<http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=81R&Bill=SB440>>.

XIV "81(R) History for SB 513." *Texas Legislature Online*. State of Texas, 11 Apr 2010. Web. 11 Apr 2010.  
<<http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=81R&Bill=SB513>>.

XV "81(R) History for HB 420." *Texas Legislature Online*. State of Texas, 11 Apr 2010. Web. 11 Apr 2010.  
<<http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=81R&Bill=HB420>>.