



MISSOURI COUNCIL *for* HISTORY EDUCATION

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In his now-classic book from 1995, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, James Loewen correctly identifies history as a furious debate formed by evidence and reason. In this work, no history teacher relies on any single source of evidence, but instead uses a variety of materials to engage students in a meaningful conversation about the past, our shared values, and the reality of conflict. When done properly, these conversations honor the vast plurality of American experiences. They break down barriers and prejudices and build in their place deeper understanding of others and a truer version of our own stories. American history that engages with our nation's successes and failures builds the civic virtue and citizenship necessary to sustain and perfect our republican experiment.

Amendment 3 to Missouri HB 1141 is an affront to the very nature of history education. The proposed amendment contradicts state standards and would ban important resources that help teachers lift American voices which have too often been silenced, oppressed, and marginalized. This amendment cheapens and disconnects every Missouri student from their own story as well as the stories of social groups who have strived to achieve full access to the Declaration's promise of equality, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It ends the study of history as a debate, the work of deliberation in the classroom, and our students' ability to inquire, analyze, and evaluate a variety of interpretations of history. It forces teachers to tell an incomplete and dishonest version of the past and leaves our students ill-equipped to live in the present. The Board of the Missouri Council for History Education, a state organization that seeks to improve history instruction in Missouri classrooms, strongly condemns this amendment and calls on our members to do the same.

This amendment, if adopted, endangers our nation's highest ideals and promises by guaranteeing the perpetuation of the ignorance and prejudices which have plagued our past. We cannot nurture responsible citizens by teaching a sanitized version of our history filled with only half-truths. If this amendment passes, generations of students will be forced to untangle once again the lies their teachers told them.

We urge our state legislators to vote no on HB 1141.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of the Missouri Council for History Education