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**STATEMENT: FL State Senator Geraldine Thompson on AP African American History Course Rejection**

“Florida Statute 1003 permits, among other things, the study of the Bible and requires a moment of silence. It protects school speech and requires instruction on the history of the Holocaust, the study of women’s and Hispanic contributions to America and the history of African Americans and African people. Instruction on the history of African Americans includes the enslavement experience, abolition, and the history and contributions of Americans of the African diaspora to society. The objective of the instruction in African American history is to assist students to develop an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping on individual freedoms, and examine what it means to be a responsible and respectful person for the purpose of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions.

The hysteria over Critical Race Theory has led to the banning of math books and the dismantling of many courses which focused on African American History that were designed to fulfill the requirements of Statute 1003. A pilot course on African American History was developed by the College Board, which designs the SAT. The College Board approves advanced placement for high schools and evaluates courses based on rigor and stringent standards. The African American History course, which would be offered as an elective, was tested in over 60 schools and has been rejected by the Florida Department of Education as promoting CRT and having “no educational value”. Will the Department of Education now reject the study of the Bible or the requirement for a moment of silence? Will it reject instruction on the history of the Holocaust or the study of women’s or Hispanic contributions to the United States as required by Statute 1003? Or, is it only African American History that lacks educational value in the eyes of the current administration?

As a former teacher, professor and college administrator, I believe Florida is heading in the wrong direction with the present attempts to micromanage education, decide course curricula and determine which groups are worthy of inclusion in the American experience.”

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