



March 10, 2010

The Honorable Gail Lowe
Chairman, State Board of Education
11 Chris Avenue
Lampasas, TX 76550

Dear Chairman Lowe:

We would like to share with you several concerns we have with the draft revisions to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Social Studies.

As state legislators, we fully understand the direct relationship between the TEKS and what is ultimately taught to public school students in classrooms across this state. Therefore, we respectfully request that the TEKS continue to include references to the Judeo-Christian heritage from which our nation was founded; to the uniqueness and greatness of our nation; and to an accurate portrayal of history.

We fear that State Board members have been pressured throughout the TEKS revision process to wash the TEKS clean of any references to Judeo-Christian faiths while promoting references to other religions. For example, a previous draft of the TEKS removed Christmas and Rosh Hashanah from a list of holidays and added Diwali, a five-day Hindu festival. Thankfully, Christmas and Rosh Hashanah have been added back to the most recent draft of the TEKS, and they both should remain.

Our nation was founded by Judeo-Christian leaders, and our founding documents reflect Judeo-Christian values. The TEKS for history and social studies, therefore, must neither trivialize nor censor the historical import of Judeo-Christian faiths.

Furthermore, previous draft TEKS revisions changed the phrase "American Expansionism" to "American Imperialism". We must remain mindful of the impressions that students draw from the manner in which historical events are framed. This one-word change from "expansionism" to "imperialism" was significant in both its connotation and factual bearings; we thank you for retaining the phrase "American Expansionism", and we urge you to resist any efforts to revert back to the phrase "American Imperialism".

There has also been much debate about the individuals who are named in TEKS drafts. For example, Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison, two great minds whose work changed the course of history and science, have been removed from TEKS draft revision, along with other historical figures.

We value a strong system of public education that prepares students to be productive citizens of Texas with a full and accurate understanding of the history that created present-day Texas and the United States. We urge that the TEKS continue to reflect the Judeo-Christian underpinnings of our nation and society; that America's greatness not be undermined; and that history and historical figures continue to be taught to Texas public school students.

We thank you for your consideration, and we greatly value your service to the State of Texas.

Sincerely,



State Representative Wayne Christian
House District 9, Center



State Representative Bryan Hughes
House District 5, Mineola



State Representative Linda Harper-Brown
House District 105, Irving



State Representative Phil King
House District 61, Weatherford



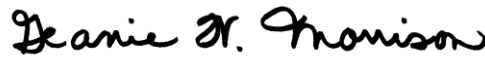
State Representative Ken Paxton
House District 70, McKinney



State Representative Jodie Laubenberg
House District 89, Parker



State Representative Leo Berman
House District 6, Tyler



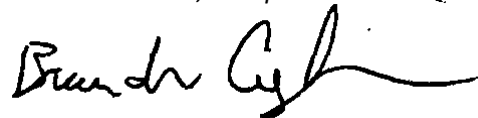
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House District 30, Victoria



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State Representative Tan Parker
House District 63, Flower Mound



State Representative Brandon Creighton
House District 16, Conroe



State Representative Larry Taylor
House District 24, Friendswood



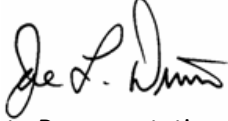
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House District 2, Van



State Representative Dennis Bonnen
House District 25, Angleton



State Representative Betty Brown
House District 4, Terrell



State Representative Joe Driver
House District 113, Garland



State Representative Rob Eissler
House District 15, The Woodlands



State Representative Allen Fletcher
House District 130, Tomball



State Representative Kelly Hancock
House District 91, North Richland Hills



State Representative Charlie Howard
House District 26, Sugar Land



State Representative Jim Jackson
House District 115, Carrollton



State Representative Tim Kleinschmidt
House District 17, Lexington



State Representative Lois Kolkhorst
House District 13, Brenham



State Representative Ken Legler
House District 144, Pasadena



State Representative Jerry Madden
House District 67, Richardson



State Representative Sid Miller
House District 59, Stephenville



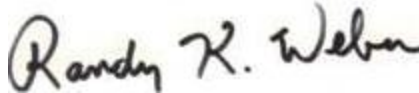
State Representative Larry Phillips
House District 62, Sherman



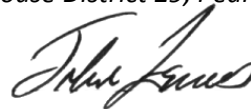
State Representative Debbie Riddle
House District 150, Tomball



State Representative Ralph Sheffield
House District 55, Temple



State Representative Randy Weber
House District 29, Pearland



State Representative John Zerwas
House District 28, Richmond

Cc:

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