



May 16, 2021

Mia Howerton
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave. SW
Room 3C152
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Ms. Howerton:

We are Asian Americans for Equal Rights (AAER), a community civil right organization based in Boston, Massachusetts. Our mission is to fight all kinds of discrimination against Asian Americans. We strongly oppose the **Proposed Priorities: American History and Civics Education**, because they will require school programs to teach divisive and controversial concepts the vast majority of Americans do not accept. First, the priorities will encourage students to see themselves and others as defined by their “racial identity” in accordance with Critical Race Theory (CRT), and to focus on differences in skin color rather than our common humanity.

CRT labels Asian Americans as white adjacent whose “historic proximity to white privilege” makes them complicit in the oppression. It erases the contributions and individualism of Asian descents attributing Asian success to White supremacy’s favoritism and benefiting from the model minority myth. CRT also downplayed the real and nefarious anti-Asian racism that happened in the U.S history.

The priorities will also instruct our children that racial discrimination is good and necessary. As stated by Ibram Kendi, whom the priorities identify as an inspiration and authority, “The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination.” Such overt discrimination and centering our immutable characteristics like skin color was widely practiced for centuries before the Civil Rights Act. They were immoral and disastrous then, and are immoral and disastrous now.

We wish for Americans to unite, move forward with a vision of optimism, and stop the destructive fighting we see all around us. But we cannot do that if our children are taught to see the world through a lens of pessimism, grievance, and resentment rather than optimism, gratitude, and forgiveness. Please do not adopt policies like these priorities that would not only prevent our country from healing, but open the door to more division and hatred.

Sincerely,

Ye Pogue, Director of Research

Helen Yang, Vice President