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Florida's New African American Curriculum Draws Criticism for Whitewashing History and Undermining Education

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. – The recent adoption of Florida's new K-12 curriculum for African American history has sparked widespread concern and condemnation from community leaders, elected officials, and education advocates for its failure to provide a comprehensive and accurate portrayal of America's past. Despite claims of inclusivity by Education **Commissioner Manny Diaz Jr.**, the curriculum has come under fire for glossing over shameful chapters in history and presenting a skewed narrative that does a disservice to Florida's students.

Critics argue that the 216-page set of guidelines falls short of the mark, as it neglects to require elementary and middle school students to learn about Black history beyond the Reconstruction era—a period marked by hostility and discrimination against African Americans.

Representative Jervonte Edmonds (D- West Palm Beach) stated, “This omission denies students the opportunity to understand the full extent of the African American experience, perpetuating historical inaccuracies and contributing to a lackluster version of American history.”

The curriculum's attempt to frame the labor skills developed by slaves as potentially "applied for their personal benefit" is particularly concerning. While officials argue that this is not meant to portray slavery as beneficial, the wording raises eyebrows and fails to fully address the harrowing realities of slavery, including the inhumane treatment and exploitation of millions of African Americans throughout history.

The failure to incorporate contemporary issues impacting Africans and African Americans further highlights the curriculum's shortcomings.

Representative Edmonds added, “Florida's students must be prepared to grapple with present-day challenges and understand how they are interconnected with

historical events. By neglecting to address these issues, the curriculum leaves students ill-equipped to engage in meaningful discussions about the ongoing struggle for racial equality and justice.”

The "Stop WOKE Act," signed by Governor Ron DeSantis, has added fuel to the fire by prohibiting lessons that acknowledge systemic racism and the legacy of oppression. Such a move stifles academic freedom and denies students the opportunity to understand the historical context of contemporary challenges facing marginalized communities.

In 1994, state lawmakers mandated K-12 instruction on the history, culture, experiences, and contributions of African Americans.

“Today, we call upon the Florida Board of Education to uphold that mandate and ensure that students receive a robust, comprehensive, and accurate education that fosters understanding, empathy, and social cohesion,” said **Representative Edmonds**.

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