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Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Representative Geraldine F. Thompson Reacts to Assertions of "State-Sanctioned Racism"  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 17, 2021

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**Representative Geraldine F. Thompson Reacts to Assertions of 'State-Sanctioned Racism'**

**Windermere, FL** – In response to comments by **Governor DeSantis**, **Representative Geraldine F. Thompson (D- Windermere)** released the following comment:

“Governor Ron DeSantis said that he is taking a stand against critical race theory which he considers ‘state-sanctioned racism’. He should be equally concerned about long-standing practices of ‘state-sanctioned racism’ in education that render certain groups, individuals and occurrences invisible. The racial injustices that occurred in Florida cities such as Rosewood, Ocoee, Groveland and Mims have not been included in Florida’s classrooms or curricula for decades or a century. To correct this omission, Governor DeSantis should support and advocate for comprehensive and honest instruction on the teaching of the Holocaust and African American History which present facts rather than theory.

Why is it that Florida students when asked can provide little or no information on Floridians who were trailblazers in the Civil Rights Movement? Why have they learned little if any facts about people like the Rev. C. K. Steele, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, T. H. Poole, Virgil Hawkins, James Weldon Johnson, Harry T. Moore, Harriette V. Moore, Carrie P. Meek, Alcee Hastings, and George Starke? Why do they have scarce knowledge about the time that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rev. Andrew Young spent in St. Augustine attempting to integrate beaches and other public places there? Do they know about the arrest of Dr. King in St. Augustine and his incarceration after he attempted to eat at the Monson Lodge in America’s oldest City? Are they aware of the 17 rabbis who traveled to St. Augustine to support Dr. King and his efforts and were subsequently arrested themselves? Why do they know more about Dr. King’s letter from the Birmingham jail than they do about his letter from the St. Augustine jail? Do students know that Andrew Young donated his papers to Flagler College in St. Augustine? The answer to these questions is Florida students have not been taught a true and unvarnished account of some people and occurrences in this State.

For four sessions I have filed legislation to require that educational leaders in any school that receives State funding be required to show cause if they cannot prove that instruction is being provided on the history of the Holocaust and African American history – a requirement that was put in Florida law more than 27 years ago. This statute has not been fully and consistently implemented. Should parents have a right to sue because their children have been miseducated? The bills I filed have never been given a hearing. I am calling on Governor DeSantis to support HB51 to end ‘state-sanctioned racism’ focused on all students. Let’s not make any student feel marginalized, invisible and less than. HB51 would require that Florida educators teach facts rather than theory as the Governor says he wants.”

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