



American Association of Geographers

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STATEMENT BY THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF GEOGRAPHERS ON THE TARGETING OF DIVERSITY EDUCATION AND CRITICAL INQUIRY BY U.S. STATES

The American Association of Geographers (AAG) strongly opposes targeted, state-sponsored attacks on diversity initiatives and on critical studies of racial inequity across the United States. Two recent, egregious examples in the State of Florida are its rejection of the AP African American Studies course curriculum and the [statement released by presidents of Florida's 28 state and community colleges](#), vowing to identify and eliminate any academic requirement or program that “compels belief in critical race theory or related concepts such as intersectionality.” These restrictive actions have been enabled and encouraged by HB 7, the state’s so-called Stop W.O.K.E. Act. The pattern of suppression is not only in Florida, however: The UCLA School of Law has documented [567 federal, state, and local actions nationwide that target diversity education and the study of racial inequity](#).

As one of the largest organizations representing geographers worldwide, the AAG denounces any threat to educational rights and freedoms. Geographers have contributed to the longstanding, fact-based areas of inquiry that are under threat, including forms of critical inquiry that examine discrimination, inequity, and power imbalances within societies. Critical scholarship has been a valued part of geographical study for decades, with important work advanced by scholars, students, and practitioners.

These advances were not gained lightly. Geographers collectively recognize the urgent imperative of protecting and actively supporting academic inquiry, especially when it challenges the status quo. Pioneering scholars of color are the ones most often confronting those realities, often at professional risk. This latest cycle of academic suppression is nothing new; it is reminiscent of previous upswells of censorship, complete with book banning, heavy-handed oversight in schools, and inverted messaging that portrays such actions as protective or liberating.

In keeping with our [policy principles](#)—advancing geographical knowledge while also supporting the highest possible educational access for the next generation—the AAG stands with our colleagues, scholars, and students in support of their right to teach, learn, and conduct research into social

injustice and how policies and practices contribute to persistent and verifiable social inequities. This examination is vital to society and our discipline.

On behalf of our 10,000 members and our community of scientists worldwide, the American Association of Geographers calls upon state governments such as the State of Florida to consider the gravity and shortsightedness of any decisions to limit access to educational material that speaks truthfully to current and historical inequities, particularly those related to race, gender, sexuality, economic status, and disability.

AAG Policy Principles

Equitable Geography

To ensure fair resources and a high quality of life for growing populations, mapping by governments and communities must be done in transparent and inclusive ways. Expert professional geographers help make sure that mapping is equitable and just.

Protecting Geography

Academic freedom and scientific discourse are essential components to a just and well-functioning society. Access to information and opportunity must remain open and accessible to all.

Protecting People

The AAG will advocate for any geographer facing direct infringement of their fundamental human rights. Geographers are central to understanding and mitigating the effects of the global climate crisis and fixing related injustices.

Preserving the Arc of Geography

The AAG seeks to sustain geographers from the beginning of education through retirement by bolstering institutions, advocating for funding, supporting programs, and utilizing assessments.

Geography for Everyone

The AAG has a duty to ensure that all geographers have equal access to resources, training, meetings, and professional opportunities. Vigilant support for these principles is essential throughout the discipline.