



February 2025

To: House Education Committee

Re: HB1149 Comprehensive Black History & Culture Education in K-12

Dear Committee Members,

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is one of the oldest women's organizations in the country, empowering women since 1881. The mission of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.

Many Americans express pride in the progress we have made in civil rights over the past 100 years. So, it is alarming that Colorado has not already implemented statewide standards for the teaching of Black history. We are concerned that many of Colorado's students do not know about the struggles, achievements, and contributions of Black Americans in politics, science, business, arts, and activism.

Ignorance about the historical and cultural contributions of this important segment of our society impacts women and girls in many ways. If we are to have a society that works for everyone, our students need to have basic knowledge of the Black experience in America. They need to know and understand the challenges that our Black friends and neighbors have faced over time, and continue to face today.

HB1149 not only requires statewide teaching standards, but also establishes a historical and cultural studies advisory committee of educators, historians, and community leaders to guide the development of standards and provide technical assistance to local school districts. It creates a resource bank of research-based, scholarly articles and promising program materials and curricula pertaining to Black historical and cultural studies.

For these reasons, AAUW of Colorado strongly supports House Bill 1149 and requests your YES vote in committee and throughout the process of becoming law.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Su Ryden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Su Ryden
AAUW Colorado Public Policy Co-Director

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American Association of University Women--AAUW is a top-rated 501(c)3 charitable organization whose mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.



INTERFAITH ALLIANCE
OF COLORADO
PROTECTING FAITH AND FREEDOM

February 18, 2025

RE: Support for HB25-1149 Comprehensive Black History & Culture Education in K-12

Chairperson Lukens and members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about why I support a Yes vote on HB25-1149 Comprehensive Black History & Culture Education in K-12. The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado promotes justice, religious liberty, and interfaith understanding through building relationships in order to educate, advocate, and catalyze social change. We are an interfaith public policy and advocacy organization with over 400 congregations in our statewide network, representing over two dozen faith traditions.

It is Black History Month, in which we take special care to reflect on the history and contributions of Black people in the United States. They are inextricably woven into the larger story of our nation's history and a context through which our current conditions must inevitably be understood. It is very timely for us to reflect on the relationships between history and storytelling, between narrative and power. The right to teach and to be educated about the truth of our history and ourselves is under attack by bad faith actors who understand those relationships very well. But I take comfort in the truth of our history, knowing that faith communities have come together to work against ignorance and injustice.

What happens in committee rooms at the Capitol directly impacts what happens in classrooms across Colorado. HB25-1149 is an opportunity to make what happens in classrooms the receipt of truthful, comprehensive, inclusive, and deeply necessary information. Therefore, I respectfully ask that you support HB25-1149 and vote Yes to advance it from the committee with your favorable recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Reverend Dr. Val Jackson
Lead Pastor, Park Hill United Methodist Church
Board Chair, Interfaith Alliance of Colorado

My name is Shan Lagard and I am the Black Civic Engagement and Policy Coordinator for Soul 2 Soul Sisters. I am testifying on behalf of Soul 2 Soul Sisters in support of House Bill 1149, Comprehensive Black History & Culture Education in K-12.

Soul 2 Soul Sisters is a racial justice organization, grounded in a reproductive justice framework, focused on ending anti-Black racism in Colorado and beyond.

Black history and Black culture contribute greatly to the rich fabric of the United States and Colorado. From Cathay Williams, the first Black woman to enlist and only documented woman to serve in the United States Army during the American Indian Wars; to Dearfield, Colorado which was the largest Black homesteading settlement in Colorado with a population of 200-300 people by 1920. And of course, right here in Denver is the historically Black neighborhood Five Points that was known as the “Harlem of the West”. These are just a few examples of Black history and culture that play such an important role in knowing not just one’s own history but also the history of the places we call home. Black history and culture education is important because it is American history and too often it has been treated as an afterthought.

Black Coloradans have a unique history and students should have access to that history before it is lost. Colorado has the opportunity to double down on their progressive values and show the rest of the country that in a time of anti-intellectualism and bans on Black history, we will always teach the hard truths and celebrate the contributions Black people have made in this country and state. Now more than ever students need inclusive educational curriculums considering that since 2021, at least 18 states have placed restrictions on certain topics related to race and the current political climate insists on pushing us into an era of misinformation. Colorado can push back and affirm that there is no American history if it does not include Black history.

Please vote yes on HB 1149. Thank you.

Sources

- <https://www.denver7.com/lifestyle/education/douglas-county-board-of-education-to-vote-on-whether-to-approve-ap-african-american-studies-class>
- <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/many-states-are-limiting-how-schools-can-teach-about-race-most-voters-disagree/2023/10>
- <https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/colorado-teacher-prepares-to-teach-first-ap-african-american-history-class-douglas-county/>

House Education

02/20/2025 01:30 PM

HB25-1149 Comprehensive Black History & Culture Ed in K-12

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Sheila Urquhart Moura For themselves	<p>My name is Sheila Urquhart Moura and I'm a native of Southampton County, VA-- the home of Nat Turner. Raised and educated in that area I learned the importance of my Black roots and history, to be a fighter and a critical thinker. You see I have the DNA of both the oppressor and the oppressed running through my veins. Without the proper knowledge and education, I would not be in the position today to share about who I am, my heritage and the value of the contributions that cannot be erased! It is a shame that we must continue to evoke mandates on truths! However, it is what it is.</p> <p>This bill is important and I'm in full agreement that all resources must be gathered, obtained and appropriately stored and shared for all generations. Teaching Black history helps students develop critical thinking skills by analyzing historical events, systemic inequalities, and social movements. It encourages discussions on justice, equity, and civic responsibility, preparing students to engage thoughtfully in a diverse society.</p> <p>We must continue to fight for cultural awareness and appreciation. We cannot be erased. Black is an adjective, pronoun, verb and noun! It will not be erased!</p>
ANALISE Goree For	My name is Analise Goree, and I am registered to vote in Colorado, own property in Aurora, Colorado and spent over a decade as a special education teacher and college adjunct professor while

<p>Curls on the Block</p>	<p>running my own non profit, Curls on the Block, supporting learners of all abilities, ages and backgrounds.</p> <p>This Testimony is not the first time I've been compelled to use my voice in support of addressing gaps negatively impacting ethnic/ racial minority communities in Colorado. I will continue to support opportunities to create a more unified and educated state for all residents and visitors.</p> <p>In 2019 through 2022, I supported HB19-1192 Inclusion Of American Minorities In Teaching Civil Government, and supported the implementation of the initial revisions to the Colorado Social Studies Standards at multiple Colorado State Board of Education townhall and meetings.</p> <p>Just 3 years ago, I was one of the more than 2000 people who signed petitions indicating their support for an honest, inclusive, and comprehensive education.</p> <p>As an African American and Afro-Puerto Rican, my work in education and goal as a non profit founder, has been to highlight and incorporate the contributions and histories of the students I work with ensuring their learning includes representation from all the boxes they can identify with from any survey.</p> <p>My own curriculum and programming for my non profit, whose mission is to provide resources and encourage girls of all curls and color to embrace explore and empower their natural selves using Beauty to Cindy with STEAM (science technology engineering art and math), is open and accessible for any student to participate, while it centers information most closely connected to the experiences and needs of young Curly and Black Girls. Providing a space where these students feel safe, seen and connected to the academic topics makes learning relevant and attainable and is missing from standards currently.</p> <p>The benefits of HB25-1149 include and incorporate state laws and many standards that exist on a broad level, while creating a mandate to ensure Black and African American history is not overlooked. The explicit requests:</p>
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	<p>Establish state wide standards, ensure implementation in all districts, a Black History Advisory Committee, develop a resource bank, promote honest, inclusive and comprehensive education; do not require a massive overhaul, research or extreme monetary investment, it does however, prioritize The protection of one of the most vulnerable demographics in Colorado.</p> <p>Just to create a parallel, there is little critique regarding Standards in curriculum addressing oceans, Gulfs, hurricanes or monsoons in Colorado weather standards, which we have no real life representation, because it is accepted as the value of basic knowledge in weather or geography.</p> <p>Students in every district should have access and experience with the History of Black Americans as that History is tied to the true American dream, speaks to work ethnic, critical thinking, unity, the importance of education, finance, perseverance, appreciation for agriculture, business ethics, political engagement, injustice, reparation, empathy, forgiveness, resiliency and innovation.</p> <p>Black history is US history.</p>
<p>Alysia Bellamy For NAACP</p>	<p>In our rural Colorado communities, we're already stretched thin. Budgets are tight, and every dollar counts. The recent decision to cut federal funding means we're facing even tougher choices. We've been working hard to expand our curriculum to include more diverse perspectives, including Black history. We desperately need experts to help us do this right – to provide accurate, engaging, and culturally sensitive materials. Without that federal support, bringing in those experts becomes nearly impossible. It's not just about Black history; it's about all areas of education. When funding gets cut, it impacts everything from classroom resources to extracurricular activities. Our kids in rural areas deserve the same quality education as anyone else, and these cuts put that at risk. It makes it harder to provide a well-rounded education and leaves gaps in their understanding of history and the world around them.</p> <p>Accurate Black and comprehensive history is crucial for several reasons:</p> <p>It tells the full story of America: Black history is an integral part of American history. To understand the nation's past, present, and the</p>

	<p>systemic issues it faces, it's essential to have a complete and honest understanding of the contributions, struggles, and experiences of Black Americans.</p> <p>It combats misinformation and stereotypes: Inaccurate or incomplete portrayals of Black history can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and misconceptions. Accurate history challenges these narratives and promotes a more nuanced and truthful understanding.</p> <p>It fosters empathy and understanding: Learning about the historical injustices and ongoing challenges faced by Black communities can foster empathy and understanding among people of all backgrounds. This can lead to greater social cohesion and a commitment to working towards a more equitable society.</p> <p>It empowers Black individuals: Knowing their history and the contributions of their ancestors can instill a sense of pride and empowerment in Black individuals. It can also inspire them to overcome challenges and strive for success.</p> <p>It helps us learn from the past: By understanding the mistakes and injustices of the past, we can work to prevent them from happening again. Studying Black history can provide valuable lessons about resilience, resistance, and the ongoing struggle for civil rights.</p> <p>In short, accurate Black history is essential for building a more just, informed, and inclusive society.</p> <p>Black History is American History. HB25-1149 is necessary to properly educate and tell the truth.</p>
<p>Jeany Rush Against themselves</p>	<p>TO: House Education Committee</p> <p>RE: HB25-1149 Comprehensive Black History & Culture Education in K-12</p> <p>Sponsors: English, Exum 2-21-25</p> <p>FROM: Jeany Rush, Colorado Springs Constituent</p> <p>VOTE: NO</p> <p>My vote of No on this bill is specific to certain items of information in Colorado,</p> <p>The State Education Board, the Disaster that is our current educational curricula in many areas,</p> <p>and the immense Over Reach of the State into our schools, and our childrens' minds.</p>

	<p>Who determines what materials are to be the standard of truth in history?</p> <p>Who determines how much of the current beliefs in Social Justice, CRT, DEI, even SEL are even accurate, and not already RACIST in their very existence?</p> <p>Programs that divide small children by color, by lies in curriculum already in existence, and outright lies, are not a way to educate about history.</p> <p>Why does my grandchild need to know what Harvey Milk does between the sheets?</p> <p>Why does my grandchild need to be told they owe retribution, etc. for something they neither did, nor were even witness to in their lifetimes?</p> <p>Why does my grandchild need to be told we are such a big offender in racism, when their ancestors died in huge numbers to fight against unequal rights for all our people, and fought against the very enslavement many are touting as history.?</p> <p>When we now know that more than 55,000,000 (million) people, children, all cultures and colors are trafficked annually in the planet, and yes, in America as well, for either sexual, organ, or work, why are we as a nation highlighting the divide and lies of White and Black.</p> <p>Most of us are multi-cultural families, and like me, immigrants as well. The billions of dollars wasted, spent by the very Marxists and Social Justice Pseudo Warriors that DOGE is currently uncovering, will be much better spent to teach academics in our schools, and not concentrating on the fake DEI and CRT misuse of truth and fake social justice ideology.</p> <p>I agree with history including all events, as they are, and I do not agree with the social justice principals taught young children which currently pit them against each other.</p> <p>Maybe we could simply teach academics, and parents are certainly able to supplement where they see missing ingredients.</p> <p>How can we teach history to children, when the curriculum does not even know the difference between a man and a woman, nor that the horrible other indoctrinations now forced on our children, is rendering them incapable of knowing truth from fiction, what is right and wrong, when our schools have become the biggest mutilators of our childrens' minds and bodies! For what, other than attacks on all of us, whether black or white, brown, red, yellow, or at this point,</p>
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	<p>even human. Our education systems have lost the ability to teach, discern, what is even best</p> <p>for our children, and I object to one more socially, motivated, agenda that pits us against each other. We don't need equity, we need equality. We already have laws about diversity, which most of us encompass. And as for inclusion, there are already laws for that as well.</p>
<p>Brianna Whitaker For themselves</p>	<p>As a proud graduate of Cherry Creek School District and a Black woman, I stand in strong support of this bill. My senior year, I had the privilege of taking a Black and African American Studies course that fundamentally reshaped my understanding of myself and my place in the world. It ignited a sense of empowerment and pride in my heritage that continues to fuel my leadership today, from my role as president of the Black Student Alliance in high school to my current work as a national non-profit leader. Colorado's students deserve the transformative experience of comprehensive Black history and culture education. This isn't just about the past; it's about empowering future generations and fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.</p>

Testimony for HB25-1149 – Comprehensive Black History & Culture Education Act

Good afternoon and thank you to the chair and members of the committee. My name is LaQuetta Walker, and I am representing myself today. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and for your service to our state.

I rise in support of HB25-1149 and thank the bill sponsors for bringing forward this important bill.

I am the mother of an amazing 21-year-old Black son, the Director of Implementation for Black Parent Network and Policy Advocate both locally and nationally. I have had the privilege of homeschooling my son to provide a quality education that is lacking in our school systems. Also, I have been a tutor for over 15 years for children grades K-12. In both roles as a homeschooling teacher and tutor, my ultimate goal is ensuring children are thriving academically, socially, and emotionally as they navigate the public school system. My work is deeply committed to cultivating equitable opportunities for children to excel in a school system that was not setup for Black children to succeed.

This bill is crucial, not only for students of Black descent but for all students, as it offers a comprehensive understanding of Black history and the diverse contributions from Black people that has helped shaped the foundation of this country. Currently, there are community organizations both locally and nationally trying to erase the written historical facts about the Black experience by banning books and editing information to fit their false ideation of our stories. All students especially Black students deserve to know the true history of the Black culture that is broader than the detrimental experiences of our ancestors who were kidnapped from their homeland only to be enslaved in the United States of America.

A country that denied us the right to learn how to read and write by making it illegal and punishable by beatings. A country that believes people should pull themselves up by their bootstraps but when Black people created their own thriving communities, they were burned down by those who hate us and our existence. A country that does not believe equity and inclusion is a priority thus causing more segregation amongst American citizens.

History means the study of past events, particularly in human affairs; the whole series of past events connected with someone or something. A history, our history, Black history that is more than our ancestors being enslaved. Our Black students need to know that our story is a story of resilience, brilliance, creativity, determination, and courage. This knowledge will ignite excitement and confidence that they can succeed as they ALL have greatness within.

Supporting the integration of Black History & Culture Education in K-12 has significant economic implications. When students have a deeper understanding and connection to their cultural roots, it will empower them to strive to become pioneers, community leaders, and entrepreneurs. We want to create a generation of students from all

backgrounds and nationalities to believe in their ability to live in a country that supports their efforts to live in a society that values, honor and respects ALL citizens.

Every Coloradan student in K-12 deserves the right to learn about Black History & Culture Education. It will enrich our society, education system, and the lives of our students to be well-rounded and well-educated citizens who will grow up to contribute to the economy.

Please VOTE YES on 1149. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
LaQuetta S. Walker, MSW
Public Policy Advocate and Consultant