

The Culture Wars Against Education Archive
Compiled by Historians for Peace and Democracy
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The multifaceted culture wars against education constitute attacks how history and social studies are taught and written. They are attempts to severely restrict or eliminate teaching about race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and LGBTQ issues. They are an assault on academic freedom in higher education and on professional autonomy and responsibility in K-12 schools. They reveal political efforts to undermine public education in the United States on all levels.

Historians for Peace and Democracy has compiled this archive of materials on the past and present of the culture wars and responses to them. We hope this archive will help teachers and students on all levels educate themselves about the current crisis and find constructive ways to respond to it. The archive provides a variety of resources that will be useful as well for journalists, commentators, politicians, and the general public. Contents will be updated regularly.

Table of Contents

[I. Key Statements and Reports by those opposing the political control of education](#)

[II. Educational Gag Orders](#)

[A. Trackers and Reports](#)

[B. Critical Race Theory](#)

[C. Teaching Race and Slavery](#)

[D. LGBTQ+ Issues](#)

[III. Book Banning](#)

[A. Trackers and Reports](#)

[B. School Libraries](#)

[C. Public Libraries](#)

[IV. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\)](#)

[A. Trackers and Reports](#)

[B. Cases](#)

[D. DEI and Academic Freedom](#)

[V. Accreditation](#)

[VI. Analyses](#)

[A. Academic Freedom and Free Speech](#)

[B. Censorship](#)

[C. Historical Precedents and Comparisons](#)

[D. Public Education](#)

[VII. Contemporary Case Studies](#)

[A. Florida, the Epicenter](#)

[B. K-12](#)

[C. Higher Education](#)

[VIII. Educational Labor](#)

[IX. Right-Wing Culture Warriors](#)

[A. Funding](#)

[B. Organizations and their Activities](#)

[X. What is to be Done](#)

[A. What is Being Done](#)

[B. How to Get Active](#)

[C. Resources for Teaching and Activism](#)

I. Key Statements and Reports

Colleen Flaherty, [“Freedom Alliance Opposes Divisive Concepts Bans”](#), *Inside Higher Ed*, Jan. 10, 2023.

A diverse set of organizations calling themselves the Academic Freedom Alliance—including AAUP, PEN America, the Associations of American Colleges and Universities and Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression—issue statement opposing bans on so-called divisive concepts.

American Association of University Professors, [“Florida’s Stop WOKE Act Must be Rejected by the Court”](#), Oct. 13, 2022.

AAUP President Irene Mulvey issued a statement condemning Florida’s stop WOKE law as a violation of academic freedom that would impose a partisan agenda on public higher education. The AHA expressed “horror (not our usual ‘concern’)” at Florida’s sweeping House Bill 999 as an attack on academic freedom and shared governance central to higher education. 84 organizations cosigned this statement.

American Historical Association, [“Statement opposing Florida House Bill 999”](#), March 2023.

The AHA expressed “horror (not our usual ‘concern’)” at Florida’s sweeping House Bill 999 as an attack on academic freedom and shared governance central to higher education. 84 organizations cosigned this statement.

American Historical Association, [“Statement Opposing Exclusion of LGBTQ+ History in Florida”](#), May 2023.

The AHA opposes the Florida Department of Education ban on instruction about sexual orientation and gender identity in grades 4-12, arguing that the ban will exclude the history of civil rights struggles and traditions that embrace gender fluidity and homosexuality.

Ta-Nehisi Coates, Angela Davis, Nikole Hannah-Jones, Ibram X. Kendi, Gloria Steinem, Cornel West and others, [“US Educational Authorities must resist Anti-Woke Censorship.”](#) *The Guardian*, March 8, 2023,

An open letter from leading Black academics, artists and policy makers protesting efforts to discredit Black Feminism, anti-racism and intersectionality. Over 3000 other signed the letter.

[Joint Statement on Behalf of a Group of 70 Countries on Academic Freedom](#). Presented to the UN Human Rights Council, March 29, 2023

Statement urging increased international cooperation in defense of academic freedom which is under attack in many countries.

Association for the Study of African American Life and History, [“Statement on Florida’s Rejection of the AP African American Studies Course”](#), Feb. 2023.

Statement protesting Florida’s rejection of the Advance Placement African American Studies Course, which the College Board developed for high school students

The Education Trust, [“U.S. Public Education is Under Attack: It’s Time to Take a Stand.”](#) February 28, 2022.

Argues that educational gag orders and book banning are an attack on public education that deprives students of an equitable education.

American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) & PEN, "[Statement by AAC&U and PEN America Regarding Recent Legislative Restrictions on Teaching and Learning](#)," June 8, 2022.

This emphasizes importance of faculty control over educational issues and notes that state control of curriculum may well endanger the accreditation of colleges and universities.

Association of University Professors (AAUP), American Historical Association (AHA), Association of American Colleges & Universities (AACU), and PEN America, "[Joint Statement on Legislative Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism and American History](#)," June 16, 2021.

A key document by 4 academic and free speech groups opposing the threatened education gag rules.

American Association of University Professors (AAUP), "[Statement on Legislation Teaching about Race](#)," Aug 4, 2021.

The AAUP defends teaching about race and Critical Race Theory and condemns political interference in curriculum.

NAACP, "[The NAACP Condemns Anti-Critical Race Theory Bills and Calls for Teaching About American Slavery from a Black Perspective](#)," December 6, 2021:.

Argues for the teaching of slavery and race from a Black perspective that emphasizes endurance and resistance.

"[ALA Statement on Censorship of Information Addressing Racial Injustice, Black American History, and Diversity Education](#)," August 18, 2021

The American Library Association condemns censorship of books dealing with race, Black American history and diversity.

Josh Moody, "[Ex-Presidents for Academic Freedom](#)", *Inside Higher Ed*, April 21, 2023.

Over 100 former college and university presidents and chancellors have joined PEN America's Champions of Higher Education to protest education gag orders, attacks on DEI and state interference in higher education.

II. Educational Gag Orders

A. Trackers and Reports

[PEN American Index of Educational Gag Orders](#).

A comprehensive and regularly updated spreadsheet listing all legislation introduced since January 2021, laws, state policies/executive orders, and live bills.

UCLA School of Law, [CRT Forward Tracking Project](#).

Interactive map displaying anti-CRT efforts introduced at the local, state and federal levels as part of project to identify, track, and analyze legislative activity restricting access to truthful information about CRT, race, and systemic racism.

Sarah Schwartz, "[Map: Where Critical Race Theory is Under Attack](#)," *Education Week*, June 11, 2021.

A regularly updated state map identifying which states have introduced bills or passed laws restricting teaching of critical race theory or limiting teacher discussion of racism and sexism.

Legiscan, [National legislative search about "critical race theory"](#), database

Legiscan is an impartial, real-time legislative tracking service for public and government use, links directly to search results for "critical race theory"

Legiscan, [National legislative search for "sexuality" and "education"](#), database.

Legiscan is an impartial, real-time legislative tracking service for public and government use, links directly to search results including both "sexuality" and "education." Bills censoring LGBTQ+ issues do not tend to say LGBTQ in the title, rather they use terms like "sexuality" and "age appropriate education." Viewers will need to manually sort through results to determine which bills are bans.

PEN America, [Educational Gag Orders](#), January 2022.

Extensive report covering gag order legislation and the context behind them with excellent links to further reading.

B. Critical Race Theory

African American Policy Forum (AAPF), [#TruthBeTold](#).

A summary of the campaign against anti-CRT/divisive concepts bills by the African American Policy Forum, a key organization in the fight against this legislation, led by Kimberlé Crenshaw, one of the intellectual founders of CRT.

Stacie Brensilver Berman, Robert Cohen, and Ryan Mills, "[Why CRT Belongs in the Classroom and how to do it right](#)," *History News Network*, Jan. 22, 2023

The authors argue that high school students can and should be exposed to CRT as part

of a debate about whether racial progress always generates backlash and whether CRT is a useful framework to explain it. They discuss a high school history course unit they designed and tested that had students read about the life and work of Derrick Bell, the grandfather of CRT and the works of his critics such as Randall Kennedy.

NAACP Legal Defense Fund, "[Critical Race Theory: Frequently Asked Questions](#)." Conveniently organized, interactive, periodically-updated source on the attack against CRT.

"[Ideas that make up critical race theory have been around long before it got its name](#)," *National Public Radio*, Sept 13, 2022.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, a founder of the field of CRT, offers a broad view of it.

Keisha N. Blain, "[To Fight Attacks on "Critical Race Theory," Look to Black History](#)," *The Nation*, February 18, 2022

A leading historian of Black American life reviews the role of Black history in undermining attacks on teaching about race.

Rana Jaleel, "[Critical Race Theory and the Assault on Antiracist Thinking](#)," *Academe*, Fall 2021. *A more extended discussion of critical race theory and the development of the attack on it from the AAUP magazine.*

Janel George, "[A Lesson on Critical Race Theory](#)," *Human Rights Magazine*, January 11, 2021 *A substantive article from the American Bar Association on the character of CRT, its key principles, the character of the attack on it, its relationship to and interventions in the field.*

Tyler Parry, "[Critical Race Theory and the Misappropriating of Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)" *Black Perspectives*, Sept 30, 2021.

Argues that conservatives misrepresent MLK Jr.'s thought when they claim he was colorblind and advocated race neutrality. In fact, King and CRT are close in their analysis of race in the U.S. and the solution proposed.

Montana Department of Justice, "[Attorney General Knudsen Issues Binding Opinion on Critical Race Theory](#)," May 27, 2021.

In a ruling having the force of law, Montana's Attorney General ruled that schools, government offices and employers are prohibited in engaging in a laundry list of activities involving discussions of or considerations of race. He labels them all as related to CRT.

C. Teaching Race and Slavery

Jelani Cobb, "[Rob DeSantis Battles the African American AP Course and History](#)", *The New Yorker*, Jan. 29, 2023.

Overview of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis's efforts since 2022 to restrict critical histories of the U.S. Focuses on restrictions to how race is taught, and on a battle over the A.P. African American studies class being offered to high school students in that state.

Eesha Pendharkar, "[Florida's Ban on AP African American Studies, Explained](#)", *Education Week*, Jan. 25, 2023.

A deeper dive into the struggle over AP African American studies in Florida. Has useful quotes from DeSantis and Florida Sect. of Education Manny Diaz Jr.

Eesha Pendharkar, [“College Board: No State Has Sway Over Final Version of AP African American Studies”](#), *Education Week*, Jan. 26, 2023.

The College Board responds to the controversy by releasing an updated version of the AP African-American studies curriculum.

Janine Giordano Drake, Robert Cohen, [“Debating the 1619 Project”](#), *Social Education*, 86:1, Jan-Feb. 2022.

This article explores the debates around the use of the 1619 project in middle and high schools and the reasons 27 states have, wrongly in the view of the authors, forbidden its use.

Robert Cohen, [“Politicians dictating what teachers can say about racism can be dangerous”](#), *Washington Post*, Feb. 3, 2022.

Cohen examines 35 essays written by University of Georgia students in 1961 to illustrate how the failure to teach about slavery, Jim Crow and racism left students both ignorant of US history and open to racist and white supremacist ideas.

Ileana Najarro, [“College Board Releases AP African American Studies Framework, Runs into Anti-CRT Laws”](#), *Education Week*, Feb. 1, 2023.

Deep dive into the revised version of the AP class, released in February 2023 to coincide with Black History month, which omitted many of the most controversial subjects and authors that Florida’s Dept. of Education had flagged.

Henry Lewis Gates, [“Who’s Afraid of Black History”](#), *New York Times*, Feb. 17, 2023.

Gates compares the current campaign against truthful black histories with similar efforts by activist Mildred Lewis Rutherford, a major intellectual architect of the Lost Cause campaign against reconstruction in the late 19th century. As he argues, Rutherford was fighting a kind of culture war against education in her own time, yet never wielded the power of the state as DeSantis does.

D. LGBTQ+ Issues

Grace Mayer, [“A Standoff over Transgender Rights”](#), *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan. 31, 2023

While legislators in many states seek to limit the rights of transgender youth, the Biden administration wants to protect them by including gender identity and sexual orientation in regulations that interpret Title IX, the gender equity act.

Liam Knox, [“Florida Colleges Ordered to Report Gender-care Services”](#), *Inside Higher Ed*, Jan. 18, 2023.

All Florida public higher ed institutions must now provide information on students being treated for gender dysphoria.

Julian Roberts-Grmela, [“Public University President faces Backlash for Canceling Student Group’s Drag show.”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 21, 2023.

The president’s cancellation of a student drag show raises questions about first amendment violations.

Anni Karni, [“Divided House Passes G.O.P. Bill on Hot-Button Schools Issues”](#), *New York Times*, March 23, 2023.

House of Representatives passed a bill saying schools must get parents’ permission to use different pronouns for their children.

Omar Encarnación, [“Florida’s ‘Don’t Say Gay’ Bill is Part of the State’s Long, Shameful History.”](#) *TIME*, May 12, 2022.

Florida bill has made state “ground zero in America’s culture wars.” Critics see bill as attempt to weaponize parental rights to marginalize LGBTQ people.

Kalyn Belsha, [“‘Am I not allowed to mention myself?’ Schools grapple with new restrictions on teaching about gender and sexuality.”](#) *Chalkbeat*, April 12, 2022.

First hand reports from high school students and teachers on the impact of restrictions on teaching about gender, sexuality and especially LGBTQ issues.

Matt Lavietes, [“From book bans to ‘Don’t Say Gay’ bill, LGBTQ kids feel ‘erased’ in the classroom.”](#) *NBC News*, Feb 20, 2022.

Thorough summary drawing together various attacks on queer kids and teachers and emphasizing their focus on trans students. Highlights role of students in fighting against book bans and lobbying school board members

Stephen Sawchuk, [“What’s Driving the Push to Restrict Schools on LGBTQ Issues?”](#) *Education Week*, April 19, 2022.

Identifies the old fears about LGBTQ people and new political tools behind proposed legislation taking aim at LGBTQ students. Emphasizes long history of push for “parent’s rights” in schools and aggressive new rhetoric about trans students.

Gabriel Arana, [“The Republican Plot to Ban LGBTQ History in Public Schools.”](#) *The New Republic*, June 28, 2021.

State bans on teaching LGBTQ history reflect resurgence of culture-war politics and religious right’s moral panic. Bills are connected to other religious exemptions granted by the Supreme Court.

III. Book Banning

A. Trackers and Reports

PEN America, [Book Bans](#).

PEN tracker of books banned in libraries and classrooms, links to browsable and searchable index of banned books and provides form for reporting a book ban.

American Library Association, [Banned and Challenged Books](#).

Information and advocacy recommendations by the largest organizations combatting book banning.

Jonathan Friedman and Nadine Farid, "[Banned in the USA: The Growing Movement to Censor Books in Schools](#)," PEN America, Sept 19, 2022:

A comprehensive report on which books are being banned and where and on which groups are the driving force behind book banning.

Jonathan Friedman, "[This Talk May be Banned in Schools](#)," TEDxKC.

Video of talk by PEN's Jonathan Friedman about book banning. Includes many useful charts and examples of bans.

American Federation of Teachers, "[On Books, Literacy and Intellectual Freedom](#)," February 24, 2022.

Resolution by AFT opposing campaigns to ban books and the written word in libraries and schools, affirming collaboration with organizations and unions defending intellectual freedom, and highlighting partnerships of educators, parents, families, and students focused on high-quality pre K-12 literacy and language arts.

Emily Drabinski, "[The Fight for Libraries: Libraries and higher education face a shared battle](#)," Academe, May 2023.

The President of the American Library Association argues that those in higher education should mobilize to combat book banning in public schools and libraries because that is part of a common struggle against state interference in education and free speech

American Library Association, "[Library Bill of Rights](#)", Jan. 2019.

The American Library Association adopted this Library Bill of Rights in 1939 and reaffirmed it most recently in 2019.

B. Bans in Public Schools

John Self, "[The 'dangerous' books too powerful to read](#)," BBC, September 21, 2022.

This covers the long history of book banning in Europe and the US and details the most banned books since the 1982 inception of Banned Books Weeks, which occurs every September.

Carrie Levine, "[All the Shelves Would Be Bare](#)," *Portside*, Feb. 20 2022.
Overview of book banning in key right-wing states and interview with Christine Emeran, the Director of the Youth Free Expression Program of the National Coalition Against Censorship.

Hannah Natanson, "[School librarians face a new penalty in the banned-book wars: Prison](#)," *Washington Post*, May 18, 2023.
Several states have passed laws that could sentence people for years if they provide "obscene" books to minors

Patricia Mazzei, Elizabeth A. Harris, Alexandra Alter, "[Florida at Center of Debate as School Book Bans surge nationally](#)," *New York Times*, April 22, 2023.
A survey of book banning in Florida, which has banned more books in public schools than any state except Texas, and the arguments being made pro and con.

C. Bans in Public Libraries

E. Tammy Kim, "[When the Culture Wars Come for the Public Library](#)", *The New Yorker*, April 20, 2023.
Kim investigates the bitter battles waged over the past several years in Flathead County Montana over what books should be in the public libraries and who should make those decisions.

Melissa Gira Grant, "[Conservatives Are Trying to Ban Books in Your Town. Librarians Are Fighting Back](#)", *The New Republic*, March 16, 2023.
Drawing on the experiences of several Michigan public libraries, this article explores how right-wing individuals and groups are urging the removal of books, often labelling them pornographic or pedophilic, harassing librarians, and in one case defunding the local library. It offers examples of how librarians are meeting these threats by altering how books can be challenged, by rallying community support and by unionizing.

Heather Cox Richardson, "[Why Rewriting History Matters: We Cannot Make Good Decisions for the Future with Inaccurate Knowledge](#)." *Milwaukee Independent*, July 26, 2021.
Richardson explores the banning of a book about the Alamo and why such bans endanger our present and future.

IV. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

A. Trackers and Reports

Chronicle of Higher Education, [“DEI Legislation Tracker”](#)

Regularly updated info on which states have passed anti DEI legislation or have proposed it. Regrettably it is behind a paywall; this archived version was last updated June 2023.

Eric Kelderman, [“The Plan to Dismantle DEI.”](#) Chronicle of Higher Education, Jan. 20, 2023

A survey of anti-DEI legislation developed by the Manhattan and Goldwater Institutes and being considered in several states.

Jeffrey Sachs and Jeremy C. Young, [“More than Meets the DEI”](#), Pen America, May 25, 2023.

A detailed analysis of the full implications of anti-DEI legislation in Florida and Ohio and the threat they represent to university autonomy and accreditation.

Eva Surovell, [“Some States Want to Ban DEI in Higher Ed. These States Want to Require It,”](#)

Chronicle of Higher Education, April 5, 2023.

New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts and Washington are requiring public colleges and universities to mandate DEI training for faculty and staff.

Kate Marijolic, [“How anti-DEI bills have already changed Higher Ed.”](#) Chronicle of Higher Education, April 13, 2023.

Update on which states have paused any spending on DEI.

J. Brian Charles, [“Colleges could be flooded with citizen lawsuits under proposed DEI legislation.”](#) Chronicle of Higher Education, March 30, 2023.

Model anti-DEI legislation proposed by the Manhattan Institute contains provisions to give employees, those applying for jobs, and the general public standing to sue a higher-ed institution that they feel violates a state’s anti-DEI laws.

B. Cases

Megan Zahneis, [“Diversity Statements are Under Fire: here’s What they are and How they’re used”](#), Chronicle of Higher Education, March 7, 2023.

A judicious exploration of the nature of the diversity statements that many universities and colleges require faculty job applicants to submit and the controversies surrounding them.

Adrienne Lu, [“Who leads America’s DEI Offices? Here are their Stories.”](#) Chronicle of Higher Education, April 19, 2023.

Four DEI officers, two from public institutions and two from private colleges, describe their roles and the challenges they face.

Megan Zahneis, [“Statehouses’ Targeting of Diversity and Tenure Is Starting to Scare Away Faculty Job Candidates”](#), Chronicle of Higher Education, May 5, 2023.

Some school in states targeting DEI and tenure report that job offers are being turned down; others claim there has been no impact.

Adrienne Lu, [“South Carolina Requests Colleges’ DEI Spending, Following Florida and Oklahoma”](#), *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 8, 2023.

States increasingly ask higher ed institutions to detail any and all spending on DEI initiatives and programs.

Francie Diep and Emma Pettit, [“DeSantis Asked Florida Universities to Detail Their Diversity Spending. Here’s How They Answered”](#), *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan. 19, 2023.

A detailed picture of what Florida’s public colleges and university spend on DEI programs and personnel that shows that on average they spend less than 1% of their total budget on these.

Audra D.S. Burch, [“Texas Lawmakers Pass Ban on D.E.I. Programs at State Universities”](#), *New York Times*, May 29, 2023.

The Texas legislature banned all DEI programs at public higher ed institutions.

Megan Zahneis, [“Statehouses’ Targeting of Diversity and Tenure Is Starting to Scare Away Faculty Job Candidates”](#), *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 5, 2023.

Some school in states targeting DEI and tenure report that job offers are being turned down; others claim there has been no impact.

C. DEI and Academic Freedom

Stacey Hawkins, [“Sometimes Diversity Trumps, Academic Freedom: Tensions Between Core Values Must Be Tested Case by Case.”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 28, 2023

Hawkins acknowledges that DEI and the right to Academic Freedom can conflict, but insists higher ed institutions should decide case by case which has priority.

Amna Khalid and Jeffrey Aaron, Snyder, [“Yes, DEI can erode academic Freedom: Let’s not Pretend Otherwise.”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 6, 2023.

A critique of what the author’s label “DEI Inc.” and the ways DEI can and has conflicted with academic freedom. Academic freedom, they argue, should take priority.

V. Accreditation

Jarrold Kelly, ["The Right-Wing War on Accreditation: Republican are Irate that their Plans to Remake Higher Education are being stymied,"](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 31, 2023

Republicans are increasingly attacking the independent accrediting agencies that determine, among other things, whether higher ed institutions are eligible for federal funding. Republicans argue these agencies are wrongly interfering in efforts to remake public colleges and universities.

Liam Knox, ["The Political Trials of a Southern Accrerator,"](#) *Inside Higher Ed*, May 8, 2023.

After Trump claimed he would "fire" the College accreditation agencies if reelected, media attention has turned to such agencies. This article discusses the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which oversees institutions in many of the most conservative states, including Florida and Texas, and so has come under attack for its limited efforts to defend academic freedom. Adam Kissel from the Heritage Foundation justifies these attacks.

Katherine Knott, ["Trump's 'Secret Weapon'?: college accreditation,"](#) *Inside Higher Ed*, May 4, 2023

Both Trump and DeSantis see attacking and undermining the current system of higher education accreditation as a means of winning the culture wars for the right.

VI. Analyses

A. Academic Freedom and Free Speech

Eduardo Peñalver, [“Statehouses, not Student Activists, are the Real Threat to Free Speech”](#), *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 17, 2023.

This essay argues against educational gag orders as the main threat to free speech on campus while insisting on the need for civil discourse and diverse viewpoints and speakers.

Katherine Knott, [“Republicans: Free Speech is Under Attack.”](#) *Inside Higher Ed*, March 30, 2023.

In March 2023 the House of Representatives Higher Education Committee held hearing on the state of free speech on college campuses and debated possible laws to protect what Republicans see as threats to religious and conservative viewpoints.

Sigal Ben-Porath and Megan Bogia, [“Academic Freedom shouldn’t be a Privilege of Wealth: Poor Schools are much more vulnerable to State Interference.”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 13, 2023.

Explains how public higher ed institutions that rely mostly on state funding are much more susceptible to conservative state interference than those that succeed in raising private funds. Those which are financially precarious are more likely to take private donations with conservative restrictions attached.

James Grossmann and Jeremy C. Young, [“The Integrity of History Education”](#), *Inside Higher Ed*, Jan. 23, 2023.

Legislation targeting the teaching of history and social studies in K-12 is impacting the integrity of history in colleges and universities.

Colleen Flaherty, [“An Affront to Open Discourse,”](#) *Inside Higher Ed*, Jun 9, 2022.

Report on PEN and American Association of Colleges and Universities conference and joint statement on educational gag orders. Useful overview with links to key documents.

B. Censorship

Ashley L. White, [“The State of Education Censorship in Institutions of Higher Ed and Implications for the Field,”](#) NAACP & American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, October 25, 2022.

This survey outlining current educational censorship by examining themes underlying proposed and enacted legislation with a focus on institutions of higher education but including implications for K-12.

Julia Boechat Machado and Ruben Zeeman, [“Censoring History goes Hand in Hand with Democratic Backsliding.”](#) *History News Network*, March 19, 2023.

This article looks at the censorship of history in Florida, Brazil, India and the Philippines and show that these efforts correlate directly with a decline of the democratic status of these states.

Timothy Snyder, [“The War on History Is a War on Democracy.”](#) *New York Times*, June 29, 2021

Provocative piece drawing parallels with Stalinist historiography and current Russian memory laws on the one hand and ed gag orders on the others. Argues cannot understand Holocaust without analyzing systemic racism, nor can one understand contemporary U.S.

Megan Zahneis [“The Real Source of Self-Censorship?”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 22, 2023.

Several surveys suggest fear of peer reaction is the main source of student self-censorship on issues of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and politics.

Emma Pettit, [“Power Shift: The student-professor Power Dynamic has Shifted. That Makes Many Faculty Members Nervous.”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 5, 2023.

Explores the shifting balance of power between students and professors in the culture wars as students object to everything from religious images and “divisive concepts” to the use of terms deemed offensive to racial and sexual minorities. University administrations are called upon to adjudicate these conflicts.

Nell Gluckman, [“This is How Censorship Happens: How Vague Laws and Heightened Fears are Creating a repressive Climate on Campus.”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb 2, 2023

Vague and sweeping laws about divisive concepts, anti-DEI, anti-WOKE as well as laws outlawing abortion in several states are leading college administrators to, in their words, “prudently manage risk” by urging faculty to avoid controversial subjects.

C. Historical Precedents and Comparisons

Ellen Schrecker, [Yes, These Bills are the New McCarthyism.](#) *Academe Blog*, Sept 12, 2021.

Laws banning teaching of CRT and other “divisive concepts” mark the return of McCarthyism, but with a broader purview than their historical predecessors.

Ellen Schrecker, [“The 50 Year War on Higher Education,”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Oct. 14, 2022.

Analyzes the roots of the current war on education to the 1960s and the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s with particular attention to the roles of Ronald Reagan and Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr.

Brianna Lebuskes, [“America Fought Its Own Battle Over Books Before it Fought the Nazis,”](#) *History News Network*, Feb. 22, 2023.

Recounts the World War II controversy between Senator Taft, who wanted to limit the books provided to US soldiers abroad and General Eisenhower and President Roosevelt who opposed all censorship.

Tara W. Hunter, [“The Long History of Conservative Indoctrination in Florida Schools,”](#) *The Nation*, Feb. 27, 2023

Focuses on the “Americanism vs Communism” course designed by educators, legislators, and private citizens representing the Florida Bar Committee, Florida Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the American Legion and a graduation requirement for all Florida high school students from 1962-1991.

David K. Johnson, [“The shameful history of the Lavender Scare echoes today”](#), *Washington Post*, April 27, 2023.

In the face of current attacks on LGBTQ+ people and rights, Johnson argues for the importance of teaching about the 1950s persecution of homosexuals in the government.

Jonathan Friedman, "[Goodbye Red Scare, Hello Ed Scare](#)," *Inside Higher Ed*, Feb 24, 2022.
Traces the spread of legislation to regulate curriculum from K-12 into higher ed and urges professors and administrators to combat these threats.

AskHistorians Podcast, "[The Silencing of Anti-Racist Educators in New York City in the Mid-20th Century](#)," Episode 184, October 21, 2021.
Educators in Harlem and Brooklyn who attempted to address racism in NYC's curriculum and school system were targeted by anti-communists.

David Austin Walsh, "[The Last Time Democrats Tried to Combat a Slippery Concept Like 'CRT'](#)" *Slate*, Nov 19, 2021.
How liberal anti-communists bought into McCarthyism and its lessons for politics today.

D. Public Education

Randi Weingarten and Jonah Edelman, "[Extremists Are Using Lies to Undermine America's Public Schools: We Need to Take a Stand](#)," *Time*, April 29, 2022.
The president of the American Federation of Teachers and the CEO of Stand for Children expose the coordinated national campaign of Christopher Rufo, Fox News and right-wing politicians to attack the legitimacy of public education and replace it with a universal voucher system.

Jamelle Bouie, "[Democrats, You can't ignore the culture wars anymore](#)," *New York Times*, April 22, 2022.
Argues that educational gag orders and attacks on LGBTQ rights are an attack on key public goods and urges Democrats to actively combat them.

Heather C. McGhee and Victor Ray, "[School is for Making Citizens](#)," *New York Times*, Sept 1, 2022.
Outlines attack on critical and balanced history education, such as in the Freedom Schools of civil rights era, and how such attacks prevent students from becoming educated citizens and are part of broad effort to create mistrust in public education.

Karin Fischer, "[The Return of College as a Public Good: Americans Increasingly See the Public Value of Higher Ed. Can Colleges Seize the Moment?](#)", *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Oct. 3, 2022.
Report covering the 1980s to the present on attitudes of parents, students, college administrators and politicians about whether the government should pay substantially for higher ed because it is a public good or whether students and parents should, because it is a private benefit.

Sarah Jaffe, "[How the Attack on Teachers Threatens the future of Public Schools](#)," *Rethinking Schools*, vol. 36, no. 3.
Argues that over half a million public school educators have quit since 2020 due not only to the pandemic and ongoing low pay and overwork but also and equally to political attacks, disrespect.

Chris Rufo, "[Laying Siege to the Institutions](#)", Hillsdale College Youtube, April 5, 2022.
Video of a Rufo lecture at conservative Christian Hillsdale College in which he lays out the full right-wing attack on what he sees as leftist control of education, DEI, teaching on gender. He advocates to both control public education and create alternatives to it.

Brian Jones, "[Race, class, and the attack on public education: Still separate, still unequal](#)," *International Socialist Review*, 2016-17.
A useful background article on the attacks on public education that preceded the current culture wars when self-described reformers promoted charter schools, attacked teachers' unions and claimed thereby to champion racial justice.

Daniel T. Gresham, "[Review of Heath Brown, Homeschooling the Right: How Conservative Education Activism Erodes the State](#)," *European Journal of American Studies*, 2021
A review of a book on the history of the home schooling movement and how it both reflects and reinforces the conservatism of its participants and erodes public education.

VII. Contemporary Case Studies

A. Florida: Epicenter of the Culture Wars

1. DeSantis and the Florida legislature

Jonathan Feingold, "[Florida Gov. DeSantis leads the GOP's national charge against public education with lessons on race and sexual orientation](#)," *The Conversation*, Jan. 18, 2023.
Feingold analyzes DeSantis's attack on everything he labels woke and argues that DeSantis denies there are any systemic injustices in the U.S. and repeats arguments of those defending segregation in in the twentieth century.

Francie Diep and Emma Pettit, "[What's Happening in Florida](#)," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan. 30, 2023.
A report on the efforts of DeSantis and the state legislature to gather information on all people, programs, salaries and communications involved in DEI work.

David Waldstreicher, "[The Forgotten Ron DeSantis Book](#)," *The Atlantic*, Feb. 22, 2023
*A review of DeSantis's *Dreams of Our Founding Fathers*, which lays out his originalist interpretation of the constitution.*

Emma Pettit, "[How a Center for Civic Education became a political Provocation: Behind the Scenes of a Controversial Effort to Combat 'Uniformity' at the University of Florida](#)", *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 22, 2023.
Pettit explores the outside organizations and aims of the University of Florida's Hamilton Center for Classical and Civic Education, the most recent of such centers established outside departments and usual academic procedures and aimed at teaching a positive view of Western Civilization.

Keith E. Whittington, "[DeSantis's Terrifying Plot Against Higher Ed: Even Conservatives Should Oppose the Florida Governor](#)," *Chronical of Higher Education*, Feb. 27, 2023
A critique of Florida's House Bill 999 which prohibits programs gender studies or critical race theory, prohibits teaching "identity politics" and "unproven theories" in general

education courses, bans espousal of diversity, equity and inclusion measures, and give University presidents and boards of trustees increased power to hire and fire faculty.

David Smith, [“Fewer Pronouns, More Guns: Ron DeSantis’s Plan to turn the US into Florida,”](#) *Guardian*, April 10, 2023.

This article situates DeSantis’s culture war policies in his larger agenda of selling Florida as a popular pro freedom and prosperous state. It analyzes who benefits and suffers from the Florida model and questions its potential popularity elsewhere.

Washington Post Editorial Board, [“Freedom is under Assault in Ron DeSantis’s Florida,”](#) *Washington Post*, April 13, 2023

Lays out the multiple attacks on freedom of the press, free enterprise, freedom to teach and learn, reproductive rights and immigrants that DeSantis is implementing in Florida and hopes to implement nationwide.

Eva Surovell, [“Diversity Spending Is Banned in Florida’s Public Colleges.”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 15, 2023.

Florida bans spending on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion initiative and bans colleges from offering general-education courses that “distort significant historical events,” teach “identity politics,” or are “based on theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, or privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States.”

Eva Surovell, [“Florida Lawmakers want oversight of invited speakers on public college campuses”](#), *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 12, 2023.

Florida legislation requires public colleges to hold at least 4 public events per year that offer a diversity of perspectives. They must report on all such events, including attendance and cost.

2. Book Bans

Eesha Pendharkar, [“There’s Confusion over Book Bans in Florida,”](#) *Education Week*, March 16, 2023.

Florida HB 1467 requires all school districts to When Duval County did so and removed biography of Roberto Clemente there was a national uproar and DeSantis and his aides blamed the school district for overreacting and claimed it only wanted “pornographic” books banned.

Hannah Natanson, [“Hide Your Books to avoid Felony Charges, Fla. Schools Tell Teachers”](#), *Washington Post*, Jan. 31, 2023.

Florida HB 1467 requires all school districts to have a trained media specialist review all books before allowing them back on library shelves. An older law mandates that If teachers or librarians provide students with inappropriate or obscene material, they could face up to 5 years in jail or a \$5000 fine.

3. New College

Benjamin Wallace-Wells, [“What is Ron DeSantis Doing to Florida’s Public Liberal Arts College,”](#) *New Yorker*, Feb. 22, 2023.

Wallace-Wells details DeSantis’ efforts to remake fundamentally the board of trustees, administration, faculty, curriculum and culture of New College, a small public progressive liberal arts institution in the face of extensive faculty and student opposition.

Tom Bartlett, [“A Professor at New College of Florida Quits in Dramatic Fashion: Here’s Why He Felt he had to.”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 2, 2023.

An interview with Matt Lepinski, Associate Professor of Computer Science, faculty chairman and member of the board of Trustees at New College, resigned from all his positions saying he is concerned about the direction in which the board is leading the college.

Michelle Goldberg, [“This Is What the Right-Wing Takeover of a Progressive College Looks Like”](#), *New York Times*, April 29, 2023.

Op-ed on the dramatic changes in New College Florida that its new right-wing board of trustees has implemented.

Katherine Joyce, [“The Florida of Today Is the America of Tomorrow”: Ron DeSantis’s New College Takeover Is Just the Beginning of the Right’s Higher Ed Crusade”](#), *Vanity Fair*, Feb. 10, 2023.

A detailed analysis of how DeSantis wants to turn New College into a version of conservative, Christian Hillsdale College and make it a model for rightwing educational reform Nationwide. Christopher Rufo, prominent Manhattan Institute culture warrior is a key ally in this effort.

4. Academic Freedom

American Association of University Professors, [“Preliminary Report of the Special Committee on Academic Freedom in Florida”](#), May 25, 2023.

Based on interviews with Florida faculty and others, this preliminary report analyzes the serious threats to academic freedom at Florida colleges and universities resulting from recent Florida legislation, the take-over of New College, the failure of college administrations to fight back and self-censorship.

Glenn C. Altschuler and David Wippman, [“Florida is trying to roll back a century of gains for academic freedom”](#), *Washington Post*, Feb. 6, 2023.

Summarizes pending Florida legislation and then details the history of academic freedom in the US and why such legislation would nullify it.

5. Funding

Andrew Cockburn, [“Swamplandia: The money behind DeSantis’ populist façade”](#), *Harpers*, Feb. 2023.

An investigation of the money behind DeSantis and his populist self-presentation.

Alyssa Bowen and Caitlin Mahoney, [“DeSantis Board of Education Nominees are Steeped in Far Right Dark Money”](#), *Truthout*, April 24, 2023.

The dark-money funded extremists appointed to the board by Ron DeSantis will wield power over Florida’s K-12 schools.

6. Reactions from higher ed personnel

Megan Zahneis, [“Washing Dirty Linen in Public’: Florida International U.’s Faculty Senate Votes No Confidence in Its Chair.”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 5, 2023.

Members of Florida International University's Faculty Senate voted no confidence in its chair, arguing that she did not strongly represent the interests of the faculty in conflicts surrounding educational gag orders and attacks on academic freedom.

Tom Bartlett, "[Shame on You': Over Fiery Protests Florida's New College Trustees Deny 5 Tenure Bids](#)", *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 26, 2022

New College Board of Trustees turn down 5 tenure cases in face of faculty and student protest. The faculty representative on the board announced he was quitting that post and leaving New College.

Paul Ortiz, "[Good News: Stop WOKE Act \(HB 7\) temporarily halted, but Tenure still under threat](#)", *United Faculty of Florida*, Nov. 28, 2022.

In November 2022, a Florida judge issued a temporary injunction against HB7 the Stop WOKE Act. Link to the full court ruling is provided.

United Faculty of Florida, "[Statement on the 'Viewpoint Discrimination' Survey: Do Not Participate!](#)", *United Faculty of Florida*, April 3, 2022

United Faculty of Florida statement urging all faculty, students and staff not to fill out the viewpoint survey being circulated by all public higher ed institutions that ask about people's religious and political views and what they think those of others are.

McKenna Schueler, "[Florida unions file lawsuits over DeSantis' union-busting bill and prepare for fight ahead.](#)", *Orlando Weekly*, May 12, 2023.

Florida Education Association, the United Faculty of Florida, the United Faculty of Florida at the University of Florida, and the Alachua County Education Association file law suit against DeSantis's legislation limiting the rights of union members.

Josh Moody, "[The Silence of Florida's Presidents](#)", *Inside Higher Ed*, March 31, 2023

None of the 40 presidents of Florida's colleges and universities are willing to speak out publicly about HB999 and other DeSantis reforms.

B. K-12 schools

Dan Petrella and Rick Pearson, "[Conservatives are targeting suburban school boards. And the elections are becoming political battlegrounds](#)", *Chicago Tribune*, March 26, 2023.

Deep investigative reporting on the contentious school board elections in several Chicago suburbs. It lays out the range of concerns, the involvement of local, state and national right wing organizations and PACs and the response of the Illinois Democratic Party.

Sue Halpern, "[The Fight for the Soul of a School Board](#)", *The New Yorker*, May 18, 2023.

An in-depth investigation of the battle over book bans in public schools in Nixa, Missouri

Elle Reeve and Samantha Guff, "[Activist moms spy on each other in culture wars over schooling](#)", *CNN*, May 20, 2023

Colorado battles between Moms for Liberty and their opponents.

Hannah Natanson, "['Slavery was wrong' and 5 other things some educators won't teach anymore](#)", *Washington Post*, March 6, 2023.

Many teachers surveyed said they no longer teach such topics and books as slavery was bad, a data base on police violence and Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Women because of parent protest or new state laws.

John Willingham, "[What's Driving the latest Texas History Wars?](#)" *History News Network*, Oct. 2, 2022.

For a decade, pro charter school, pro school choice and Christian Nationalist PACs have gained increasing influence on the Texas State Board of Education and blocked any social studies curriculum that proposed critical and accurate history.

Anna Merod, "[Study: Anti-CRT campaigns impact districts with 35% of nation's students](#)", *K-12 Dive*, Jan. 21, 2022

A survey of the broad impact of anti-CRT campaigns in K-12 schools and the coordinated methods used to spread them.

Ashley Stalnecker, "[Hempfield board advances policies limiting sexually explicit content in school libraries](#)", *Lancaster Online*, May 10, 2023

Part of a series of articles about the battle over whether the Hempfield Pennsylvania school board should ban books. Parents were involved on both sides, while students protested any bans.

Olivia B. Waxman, "[Critical Race Theory Is Simply the Latest Bogeyman.' Inside the Fight Over What Kids Learn About America's History](#)," *TIME*, July 16, 2021

Detailed investigation about how battles around CRT and books played out in one Missouri school district.

Megan O'Matz, "[What Increasingly Partisan and Venomous Wisconsin School Board Races Reveal About American Elections.](#)" *ProPublica*, April 1, 2022.

Analyzes how local conservative activists and national figures like Steve Bannon have transformed Wisconsin school board elections, which previously focused on taxes and teacher pay, into bitter partisan battles over personnel, curriculum and parents' rights.

Jeremy Schwartz, "[A Push to Remove LGBTQ Books in One County Could Signal Rising Partisanship on School Boards](#)," *ProPublica*, Feb 7, 2022.

Reconstructs the years long and successful efforts of far-right Christian conservatives in Hood County Texas to win seats on school and library boards, get books, mainly with LGBTQ themes, removed from school libraries, and harass teachers and librarians until they quit in fear.

Timothy Messer-Kruse, "[Anti-Critical Race Theory and Neo- McCarthyism](#)," *Counterpunch*, June 18, 2021.

Uses the career of Ohio State Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur to illustrate how right-wing conservatives in Ohio are trying (so far unsuccessfully) to revamp the K-12 curriculum by eliminating references to fair play, the common good, and environmentalism among other terms and labeling the US a constitutional republic not a democracy.

Stephen Jackson, "[Standards of Revision: Partisan Politics Comes to South Dakota's Schools](#)," *Perspectives on History*, October 26, 2022.

Jackson, a history professor, participated in the South Dakota K-12 social studies revision process, helping write a document that incorporated indigenous voices and

emphasized critical thinking. The state Dept. of Education and governor first rewrote the report, then appointed a new revision committee with few teachers and produced a third version with no indigenous voices and an emphasis on memorization.

J. David Goodman, "[How A Christian Phone Company Became a Rising Force in Texas Politics](#)," *New York Times*, Oct 6, 2022.

Investigates how the Patriot Mobile phone company became a major funder of conservative candidates for school boards in Tarrant County Texas; they went on to ban books and force out teachers and a principle.

Nicole Carr, "[White Parents Rallied to Chase Black Educator Out of Town. Then, They Followed Her to the Next One](#)," *ProPublica*, June 16, 2022.

Traces the successful campaign by white conservatives to fire an experienced Black educator who was hired to direct Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives in the Cherokee County Georgia school district

C. Higher Education

Josh Moody, "[A Tale of 3 Governors](#)": *Inside Higher Ed*, March 8, 2023

Surveys the common patterns in the ways that the GOP Governors of Florida, Texas and Virginia have used attacks on higher education to rally their base, and so burnish their conservative bona fides in preparation for the 2024 Presidential race.

Liam Knox, "[North Carolina at the Crossroads](#)," *Inside Higher Ed*, March 7, 2023.

A review of multiple cases in which the University of North Carolina Board of Governors, which is appointed by the Republican- majority General Assembly, has been accused of overreach and political interference, such as when it has closed centers on poverty and environmental issues and fast-tracked a School of Civic Life and Leadership against faculty opposition.

Ryan Quinn, "[A Policy Violation or Free Speech?](#)", *Inside Higher Ed*, Mar. 8, 2023

Indiana University faculty members who wrote to state legislators opposing proposed restrictions on abortion were told by the University's leadership that the letter was a "policy violation" and were threatened with disciplinary action.

Karen Marijolic, "[North Dakota Just Enacted a 'Specified Concepts' Bill. Here's What It Says](#)", *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 25, 2023.

North Dakota passed a bill outlawing DEI training for personnel in public higher ed and such personnel cannot be asked about their ideological and political views or disciplined if they disagree with any of 16 statements about race, gender and sexuality laid out in the bill.

Chelsea Long, "[When Diversity became a Bad Word](#)", *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan. 25, 2023.

Battles around DEI at the University of South Dakota.

Jennifer Ruth, "[Academic Freedom and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)", *Academe Blog*, Jan. 13, 2021.

Article on Hamline firing of adjunct who show an image of Mohammed painted by a Muslim that is a classic of art history.

The Univ. of Minnesota Tenure-Stream Art History Faculty, [“Art History Faculty Statement on Recent Events at Hamline University”](#), *Academe Blog*, Jan. 23, 2023.

Statement by Art Department of the University of Minnesota on the firing of Hamline art professor for showing an image of Mohammed.

Karin Fischer, [“A Playbook for Knocking Down Higher Ed: A Decade Ago Wisconsin’s Governor Made Higher Edge a Wedge Issue. Now His Approach has Gone National.”](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Oct. 18, 2022.

Analysis of the attack on the budgets, personnel, curriculum and autonomy of Wisconsin’s public universities and colleges by Governor Scott Walker (2011-19), why it garnered so much support and how it has been taken up elsewhere.

Daniel Golden and Kirsten Berg, [“The Other Cancel Culture: How a Public University Is Bowing to a Conservative Crusade”](#) *ProPublica*, June 29, 2022.

Explores how Boise State University’s administration has changed policies in the face of attacks from the Idaho legislature and school alums.

Eric Kelderman, [“How Mitch Daniels Made Perdue a University Conservatives Can Love”](#), *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan. 9, 2023.

A very positive review of Mitch Daniel’s term as president of Perdue University, where he froze tuition, greatly increased STEM majors, adopted the Chicago principles on free speech and weakened shared governance by forcing through a mandatory civic literacy requirement against the wishes of the faculty senate.

VIII. Educational Labor

A. Teachers respond to the Culture Wars

Madeline Will, "[Teachers' Unions Vow to Defend Members in Critical Race Theory Fight](#)," *Education Week*, July 06, 2021.

Report on NEA-AFT statements and actions regarding educational gag orders.

John Nichols, "[Randi Weingarten Rips CRT Critics for 'Trying to Stop Us From Teaching Students Accurate History'](#)," *The Nation*, July 9, 2021.

AFT President Randi Weingarten's attack on criticisms of CRT, their meaning, and the reactions to them.

Juan Perez Jr, "[Teacher unions push back on debate over critical race theory](#)," *Politico*, July 6, 2021.

Report on NEA approval of funds to investigate conservative groups that are attacking educators and to publicize accurate information about CRT.

Virginia Myers, "[Anti-racist education benefits all of us](#)," *American Federation of Teachers*, July 7, 2021.

Coverage of event with Ibram X. Kendi and AFT about the connection between anti-racism and education, and emphasizing importance of teaching about racism to national healing and progress.

Becky Pringle, "[Our children deserve to know the truth. Honest education can't leave out race and racism](#)," *USA Today*, June 29, 2021.

Op-ed by National Education Association President and middle school teacher, Becky Pringle, on efforts to deny students their right to truthful and honest education and how this fearmongering is an attempt to distract from politicians' failures to address structural problems in the school system.

Amanda Litvinov, "[It's Freedom We're Fighting For](#)," *NEA Today*, July 4, 2022.

NEA Executive Director Kim Anderson explains how the connection between public education and democracy makes educators key to defending social and political freedoms. Calls on educators, students, and parents to counteract efforts to privatize public education.

Ryan Quinn, "[Hundreds of UNC Professors oppose 'overreach'](#)," *Inside Higher Ed*, April 28, 2023.

Professors at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill protest excessive interventions by the state legislature, the UNC Board of Governors and the Chapel Hill Board of Trustees.

B. Tenure under attack

Heather Hollingsworth, "[Conservatives take aim at tenure for university professors](#)," *Associated Press*, Jan. 9, 2023.

An overview of attacks on tenure by Hollingsworth.

Jacques Berlinerblu, ["They've been Scheming to cut tenure for years: We're in the execution phase of the profession's demise"](#), *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 3, 2023.

A review of the long decline of tenured/tenure trade faculty and rise of the non-TT full time faculty that blames not only donors, boards of trustees, and administrators for this but also t/tt faculty who have collaborated in the creation of this class of academic workers, failed to show solidarity with the non T/TT and organize.

Jennifer Ruth, ["The Increasingly Authoritarian War on Tenure"](#), *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 23, 2022.

Explores Texas Lt. Gov, Dan Patrick's attacks on tenure and argues that his claims are not based on evidence.

Ryan Quinn, ["Firing Tenured Faculty with No Appeal Right,"](#) *Inside Higher Ed*, Jan. 26, 2023.

Report on proposed North Dakota legislation to give university presidents of public institutions the power to review and fire tenured faculty who would have no right of appeal.

Ryan Quinn, ["Faculty Expresses Fear of Firing"](#), *Inside Higher Ed*, Jan. 24, 2023.

West Virginia Faculty fear threats to Tenure from new Post tenure Reviews.

Jack Dura, ["North Dakota Senate defeats Bill to Change faculty tenure at Bismarck State and Dickinson State"](#), *The Bismarck Tribune*, March 31, 2023

Account of the narrow defeat in ND State Senate of House Bill 1446, which would have made it easier for University administrators to fire tenured faculty.

"Sergio Martinez-Beltrán, ["Public Universities could no longer offer tenure for professors under Texas Senate Bill,"](#) *Texas Public Radio*, March 30, 2023

Reports on the proposed Texas State Senate Bill 18 that would end tenure entirely in that state, set in the context of DeSantis and Dan Patrick's efforts to bring academics to heel who have insisted on their freedom to research and teach without political oversight.

Emma Pettit, ["Florida's Public-University Board Approves Firing Poorly Performing Tenured Professors"](#), *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 29, 2023.

Florida's governing board extends and makes uniform the state's new post-tenure review process for its public universities. Critics claim it will turn tenure into a five-year contract, and discourage talented faculty from coming to the state.

Kate McGee, ["An effort to ban faculty tenure in public universities has failed in the Texas Legislature"](#), *Texas Tribune*, May 27, 2023.

The Texas State Senate voted to end tenure with SB18 (see above), but the State House of Representatives refused to go along and instead passed a bill enshrining tenure in state law. The Senate accepted this.

Ryan Quinn, ["Lacking Collective Bargaining Rights but Organizing Anyway,"](#) *Inside Higher Ed*, March 1, 2023.

United Campus Workers Union is seeking to organize both faculty and staff into a single, wall-to-wall bargaining unit on campuses where both lack collective bargaining rights.

IX. Right-wing Culture Warriors

A. Funding

Maurice T. Cunningham, "[Merchants of Deception: Parent Props and their Funders](#)", *Network for Public Education*, Feb. 2023.

A detailed expose of the funding, leading personnel, media connections, and false "creation stories" of conservative Astroturf organizations Parents Defending Education, Mom For Liberty and No Left Turn in Education and the neoliberal pro charter school, anti-union National Parents Union.

Walter Bragman, "["Grassroots' Parents' Rights Groups gets Big Mystery Money"](#)", *Important Context*, Feb. 27, 2023.

Bragman explores how the ostensibly grassroots Moms For Liberty was widely promoted by right-wing media and has close ties to such conservative groups as the Council for National Policy, the Leadership Institute, the Heritage Foundation and Turning Point USA. Its most recent 990 tax form, required of all 501(c)4 organizations revealed that 60% of its \$370,000 in revenue came from 5 anonymous donors.

Ralph Wilson and Isaac Kamola, "[Koch's Campus Free Speech Ploy](#)", *The Progressive Magazine*, Nov. 19, 2021.

The ultra-libertarian Koch donor network claims there is a free speech crisis on campuses that marginalizes conservative voices and pours money into combatting this.

Matthew Cunningham-Cook, "[How Wall Street is Funding the Culture War](#)," *The Lever*, September 13, 2022.

Analyzes the individuals, including hedge fund managers Paul Singer and John Paulson, who sit on the board of the Manhattan Institute, for which Christopher Rufo works, and have donated generously to it.

Edward Graham, "[Who is Behind Attacks on Educators and Public Schools](#)," *NEAToday*, December 14, 2021.

Surveys the small groups who are leading the attack on discussions of race, history, and gender and the conservative funders who support them.

Maurice Cunningham, "[Koch Connections and Sham Grassroots of Parents Defending Education](#)," *Mass Politics Profs*, April 12, 2021.

Lays out the top down funding and leadership of Parents Defending Education and its close connections with Moms for Liberty and No Left Turn in Education.

Little Sis, www.LittleSis.org

Free database that maps connections between wealth foundations and individuals and organizations. Useful for funding of right-wing culture warriors, but requires one to sign up for an account.

B. Organizations and their Activities

James Grossman and Jeremy C. Young, "[To understand the history wars, follow the paper trail](#)," *The Hill*, July 5, 2021.

Investigates the individuals and organizations which are writing the anti-CRT and divisive concept bills, the similar language used and the lack of knowledge of local curriculum

American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)

David Armaik, "[ALEC Claims Credit for Voter Suppression and Anti-Critical Race Theory Laws at Secret Meeting](#)," *Exposed by CMD*, Sept 7, 2021.

Report on a meeting of the Christian-right Council for National Policy at which ALEC claimed credit for drawing up laws prohibiting teaching the history of racism, as well as laws enabling voter suppression.

Don Weiner and Alex Kotch, "[ALEC Inspires Lawmakers to File Anti-Critical Race Theory Bills](#)," *Exposed by CMD*, July 27, 2021.

Report on a 2020 ALEC workshop for state legislators, corporate lobbyists, and staff of right-wing institutes and foundations to teach how to draw up bill against teaching about race and gender.

Manhattan Institute

Benjamin Wallace-Wells, "[How a Conservative Activist Invented the Conflict Over Critical Race Theory](#)," *New Yorker*, June 18 2021.

The Manhattan Institute is home to Christopher Rufo, who has redefined critical race theory to serve as a political weapon for the conservative culture war.

Hillsdale College

Timothy Messer-Kruse, "Patriotic Education," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 5, 2021.
Analyzes the Hillsdale 1776 Curriculum.

Adam Laats, "[How Conservative Colleges Win the Culture Wars: Academic-Freedom Crackdowns get the Headlines but the Real Fight is Elsewhere](#)," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Oct. 24, 2022.

Examines how Hillsdale College and its Hillsdale 1776 Curriculum has become the leader in providing a conservative, patriotic, Christian version of US history for charter and religious schools and home schooling.

Emma Green, "[The Christian Liberal Arts School at the Heart of the Culture Wars](#)," *New Yorker*, April 3, 2023.

The history, mission and curriculum of Hillsdale College and the politics of its leadership.

Megan Threlkeld, "[Hillsdale College's New Strategy in the School Wars Merges Curriculum and Privatization through 'Choice'](#)", *History News Network*, Jan. 8, 2023.

Provides a detailed discussion of Hillsdale's 1776 social studies and history curriculum, which is used in all their charter schools and 50 others and argues that Hillsdale, unlike those who promoted a patriotic education in the Progressive era, are waging a war against public education.

1776 Project Political Action Committee, <https://1776projectpac.com>

Describes itself as dedicated to electing school board members nationwide who want to promote patriotism and pride in American history and abolish critical race theory and the 1619 Project from public school curricula.

Leadership Institute (Virginia), [“School Board Campaign Training”](#)

The Leadership Institute runs training programs for conservative who want to win school board elections.

Moms for Liberty

Paige Williams, [“The Right-Wing Mothers Fueling the School-Board Wars,”](#) New Yorker, October 31, 2022.

A detailed reconstruction of the multiple tactics used by Moms for Liberty in a white, affluent suburban Nashville school district to attack a widely used English and Language Arts curriculum, the district superintendent and diversity consultants.

[“Moms for Liberty,”](#) GLAAD Accountability Project.

Succinct overview of the founders, funders, goals and activism of Moms for Liberty by GLAAD which monitors misinformation about LGBTQ people.

Olivia Little, [“Unmasking Moms for Liberty,”](#) MediaMatters, Nov 12, 2021.

Very thorough analysis of structure of Moms for Liberty and connections to right-wing foundations and GOP.

Tyler Kingkade, [“Moms for Liberty’s conservative activists are planning their next move: Taking over school boards”](#) NBCNews, July 17, 2022.

Report on the first national summit of Moms for Liberty (195 chapters in 37 states) and the Republican politicians promoting the organization and its agenda.

Laura Jedeed, [“Moms for Liberty Has Created Nightmares for Schools Across the Country,”](#) The New Republic, May 31, 20

Investigates the multipronged Moms for Liberty strategy to shape curriculum and ban books as well as elect right-wing candidates and in the long run, undermine public education by implementing school choice.

Tim Craig, [“Moms for Liberty has turned ‘parental rights’ into a rallying cry for conservative parents,”](#) Washington Post, Oct 15, 2021.

Uses Brevard County Florida as an example of how the staunchly conservative Moms for Liberty grew by weaponizing parental rights and attacking curriculum, books, and covid policies.

X. What is to be Done

A. What is being Done

Pen America, [“Pen America sues Escambia County School District”](#), May 17, 2023.
Pen America sues a Florida school district over book ban. Link to [YouTube](#) video statement.

Jennifer Berkshire, [“How to Fight Back Against the Right's ‘Parents’ Rights’ Moral Panic”](#), *The Nation*, May 5, 2023.
An analysis of how the right is using the slogan of parental rights to ban books, determine curricula and control school board and how in several states, including red ones, coalitions have successfully defeated these efforts.

Tovia Smith, [“Plot twist: Activists skirt book bans with guerrilla giveaways and pop-up libraries”](#), *NPR*, March 23, 2023.
Activists are combatting book bans by giving away free books and setting up little free libraries on streets and pop up banned book nooks in ice cream parlors.

American Historical Association, [“AHA testimony before legislatures and school boards”](#).
*Examples of historians’ testimonies before state departments of education and school boards re: teaching honest history. Includes **audio links** to that testimony.*

Ryan Quinn, [“A Teach-In on Race, in DeSantis’s Backyard”](#), *Inside Higher Ed*, May 23, 2023.
Report on a 24-hour teach-in by current and former professors, K-12 teachers, and others, who lectured online and in person at St. Petersburg’s Greater Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Greg Sargent, [“The blue Midwest is where DeSantis’s school crackdowns ‘go to die’”](#), *Washington Post*, Feb. 3, 2023.
This opinion piece explores efforts of Democratic governors in the Midwest to resist the anti-woke agenda of DeSantis and others and defend the unrestricted teaching of US history.

Marina Touré, [“Brooklyn’s Library Seeks to Slip Books through Red State Bans.”](#) *Portside*, Sept. 28, 2022:
Report on Brooklyn Public Library program that lends thousands of ebooks to students and adults in places where they are banned.

AAPF, [Books Unbanned: From Freedom Riders to Freedoms Readers:](#)
The African American Policy Forum campaign to combat book banning included a Books Unbanned Bus Tour through the Midwest and South, cosponsored by the Transformative Justice Coalition and Black Voters Matter. The AAPF is now setting up Books Unbanned Book Clubs.

Maria Touré, [“Brooklyn’s Library Seeks to Slip Books through Red State Bans.”](#) *Portside*, Sept. 28, 2022
Report on Brooklyn Public Library program that lends thousands of ebooks to students and adults in places where they are banned.

Valerie Strauss, "[Teachers across the country protest laws restricting lessons on racism](#)," *Washington Post*, June 12, 2020.

Examples of local teachers' actions against educational gag orders as well as activism of NEA and Zinn Education Project.

Adrienne Lu, "[Education Professors React to Divisive-Concepts Laws](#)," *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, April 25, 2022.

How Education School faculty are pushing back against educational gag orders.

Tim Walker, "[Educators Fight Back Against Gag Orders, Book Bans and Intimidation](#)," *NEA Today*, July 28, 2022.

Coverage of educators' responses to legislative efforts to restrict teaching about racism, LGBTQ+ issues and other "divisive concepts," as well as targeted harassment of educators.

"[Teachers Refuse to Lie to Students](#)," *Zinn Education Project*, Feb 15, 2022.

More than 8K teachers have signed the pledge to teach history honestly as an act of resistance to GOP bills. Includes some of the pledges.

Kathryn Joyce, "[Fighting back against CRT Panic: Educators organize around the threat to academic freedom](#)," *Salon*, March 7, 2022.

Interview with AAPF's Sumi Cho about Truth Be Told initiative and Faculty Senate Resolutions.

Southern Poverty Law Center, "[Cousins et al. v. The School Board of Orange County et. al.](#)," Filed July 25, 2022.

SPLC's litigation on behalf of some Florida parents and children against Florida's HB 1557, commonly referred to as the "Don't Say Gay" law, which, the complaint argues, violates free speech, due process and equal protection under laws.

Margaret Power, "[Historians Mobilize to Fight Back Against Right-wing Attacks](#)," *History News Network*, Feb. 6, 2023.

Outlines the activities Historians for Peace and Democracy has taken to combat educational gag orders and book bans.

B. How to get Active

[Historians on Call](#)

Historians-on-Call is a joint campaign with Historians for Peace and Democracy and the Zinn Education Project in which scholars volunteer to act in solidarity with local educators, librarians, and school board members under fire due to anti-CRT/divisive concepts campaigns and legislation.

Zinn Education Project, "[Right-Wing Campaign to Block Teaching for Social Justice](#)," September 30, 2022 (regularly updated):.

Suggests multiple ways to respond

[National Council for the Social Studies](#)

Provides basic information on how social studies educators can engage in activism.

African American Policy Forum, "[#TruthBeTold Campaign](#)."
Information on their academic freedom petition and faculty senate resolutions campaign including information about how to get involved.

[New Jersey Public Education Coalition](#)

A non-partisan group of educators, administrators, municipal leaders, parents, and concerned citizens who seek to protect public schools and communities from right-wing extremism.

[STOP Moms for Liberty](#) (National)

A Facebook group coordinating local and state groups which are combatting the efforts of Moms for Liberty to take over public schools.

[Red Wine & Blue](#)

A group organizing suburban moms in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina and Michigan to fight against right-wing extremist take overs of public schools.

[Defense of Democracy](#)

A nonpartisan organization fighting against those seeking to infuse public schools with a Christian nationalist agenda. Active in Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Education Truth Project, [Petition to state legislators to pass laws prohibiting book banning](#), May 2023.

If you want your state legislature to pass a law banning book banning, as Illinois has done, contact the Education Truth Project, which is launching a national petition campaign to get other states to punish public institutions that ban books.

National Education Association, "[Bargaining for the Common Good](#)"

Outlines how education union members can unite with community people and organization if they bargain collectively for such things as smaller classes, equitable disciplinary policies and less testing.

Jennifer Ruth and Ellen Schrecker, "[Faculty, You Have Power! Use It!](#)," *Academe Blog*, February 14, 2022

Argues that faculty are not powerless in responding to crises of the academy. In addition to lobbying, emailing politicians, and writing op-eds and letters, faculty need to take collective action to demonstrate united opposition to interference in academic freedom

The Authors' Guild, "[Join Us to Stop Book Banning](#)," Dec 3, 2021 (updated May 10, 2022).

Provides sample letters to school and library boards and local and state representatives as well as templates for op-eds to oppose book bans.

Brendan Cantwell, "[The Culture War has Come for Higher Ed](#)," *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, July 12, 2021.

A plea for college faculty and administrations to acknowledge that there is a culture war, to tell the truth, defend faculty of color and push back against educational gag orders and attacks on tenure.

[Higher Ed Labor United](#)

A national organization committed to reforming higher ed by, among other things,

reducing contingent labor and defending academic freedom.

C. Resources for Teaching and Activism

American Historical Association, "[Criteria for Standards in History/Social Studies/Social Sciences](#)", 2019.

Useful guide for those evaluating history/social studies standards and testifying before school boards and state departments of education.

Zinn Education Project, [Teaching Materials](#).

Provides an abundance of resources for all periods of US history, covering multiple themes and divided by grade levels. Resources include articles, books, audio, websites, and films as well as teaching activities.

American Historical Association, "[Teaching History with Integrity](#),"

The largest US professional association of historians provides resources and support for history educators facing intensifying controversies over the teaching of US history.

American Historical Association, "[A Snapshot of the Public's Views on History](#)," August 30, 2021.

Summary of survey about public attitudes toward what history is and how it should be taught. Full report and data can be downloaded [here](#)

Southern Poverty Law Center, [Know Your Rights: Students and LGBTQ Rights at School](#).

Lays out the legal rights which LGBTQ students have, explains how to document and seek redress from a school if they are violated and provides a link to the SPLC if further action is needed.

Scholars for a New Deal in Higher Education, "[Tools and Resources](#)", 2023

Toolkits on how to write op-eds; how to give faculty senates can organize presentations on academic freedom, the crisis in higher education, and student debt; and how to organize conference presentations about the challenges facing higher education.

Megan Threkeld, "[Teaching the History Wars](#)," *Perspectives on History*, April 18, 2023.

A professor of history at Denison University explains why it is important to teach the history of history wars and how she does so.

American Council on Education and Pen America, "[Making the Case for Academic Freedom in a Challenging Political Environment: A Resource Guide for Campus Leaders](#)", Feb. 24, 2023.

The ACE and Pen America have provided a resource guide for campus leaders and a brief overview thereof for faculty and other university stakeholders on what academic freedom is and how to defend it from current attacks.

NEA Ed Justice "[Racial Justice in Education Resource Guide](#)," Jan 2021.

Provides resources about and practical ways to sharpen teachers' analysis of race, and effectively discuss race in the classroom.

PEN America, [Campus Free Speech Guide](#).

This guide provides resources for administrators, faculty and students on issues ranging from academic freedom, discrimination and harassment and hateful speech to invited

speakers and campus protests.

PEN America, [Free Expression Advocacy Institutes](#).

Pen offers online multi-week programs to help students understand and act in defense of free expression.

American Historical Association, [Teaching Resources for Historians](#).

Provides classroom materials for K-12 and higher ed organized by topic (e.g. local history, empire, political history, food and food ways), by resource type (e.g. digitalized primary sources and teaching modules) and by approaches to teaching (e.g. globalizing U.S. survey and supporting K-12 teaching.)

[UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement](#).

Provides research and resources relating to free speech as well as a list of fellows working on this issue.

[Learn from History](#),

Provides guides for school system leaders and school board members on how to combat misinformation and defend the accurate teaching of history and social studies.