Testimony before the State Board of Education regarding the Social Studies Curriculum

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Good morning, Chair McLeroy and members of the State Board of Education. I am Brooke Terry, an education policy analyst, with the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

I am here today to share our concerns regarding changes to the social studies curriculum or TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills). Based on our review of the revised TEKS, we are concerned that important pieces of history are being removed or changed. In addition, we see repeated examples of *bias* against individualism, against the free enterprise system, and against personal responsibility.

We bring this to your attention today in hopes that the Board can rectify this situation and protect Texas' k-12 social studies curriculum from unnecessary or inappropriate revisions.

Here are some examples of the revisions:

Kindergarten
- Removes suggested selections of *You're A Grand Old Flag* and a children's biography of George Washington.

First Grade
- Removes the suggested selection of a children's biography of Abraham Lincoln.
- In the section on holidays, customs, and celebrations, it removes Independence Day and Veterans' Day.
- In the section on holidays, customs, and celebrations, it removes anthems and mottoes of Texas and the United States.
- In the list of character traits of good citizenship, it removes "a belief in justice and truth."
- In the section on historical figures who exemplified good citizenship, it removes Clara Barton and Nathan Hale.
- Removes the Liberty Bell from the list of patriotic symbols.

Second Grade
- Changes the phrase "importance of work" to "benefits of work."
- In the section on economics and work, removes the phrase "in the U.S. free enterprise system."

Third Grade

- Removes references to Daniel Boone, Pecos Bill, Paul Bunyan, and Robinson Crusoe.
- Adds many new names including: Grace Hopper, Margaret Knight, Quanah Parker, Dr. Hector P. Garcia, Maya Lin, Maya Angelou, Sandra Cisneros, Kadir Nelson, Jean Pinkey, Angela Shelf Medear, Elisabet Ney, Carmen Lomas Garza, and Bill Martin.

Fourth Grade

- Removes the suggested selection of a children's biography of Stephen F. Austin.

Eighth Grade

- In the history of the revolution section, it removes the phrase "describe how religion contributed to the growth of representative government in the American colonies."
- In the section on the importance of personal responsibilities such as accepting responsibility for one's behavior, it deletes "supporting one's family."
- In the section on the founding fathers and civic virtue, it removes William Penn in the discussion on self-government in colonial America.

High School World History Studies

- Removes John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* and English common law.

High School Government

- Removes John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*.
- In the section on economics, changes the phrase "free enterprise system" to "capitalist system."
- In the section on economics, deletes the phrase "compare the role of government in the U.S. free enterprise system and other economic systems" and replaces it with "examine how the U.S. government uses economic leverage in foreign policy."
- In the section on citizenship, removes the phrase "analyze the role of each branch of government in protecting the rights of individuals."
- In the section on science, technology, and society, removes the reference to the private sector as helping improve consumer products and only mentions government-assisted research.
- In the section on science, technology, and society, replaces the phrase "analyze how policies fostering competition and entrepreneurship have resulted in scientific discoveries and technological innovations" with the "U.S. Constitution protects scientific discoveries and technological innovations."

High School Economics

- Changes "free enterprise system" to "capitalism" throughout the document. ☆