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LDF Media
media@naacpldf.org

LDF and Other Civil Rights Organizations Denounce South Carolina Department of Education’s Removal of Course Credit for AP African American Studies

Today, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) and other civil rights organizations sent a [letter](#) to the Superintendent of the South Carolina Department of Education denouncing its decision to remove course credit for Advanced Placement (AP) African American Studies. The civil rights organizations urged the S.C. Department of Education to restore academic credit for the course, citing the importance of fostering inclusive education for all students.

“All students deserve access to public education that is high-quality, accurate, and inclusive. By eliminating AP African American Studies in the 2024-25 school year, the S.C. Department of Education deprives many students from participating in quality coursework and earning college credit,” said LDF Assistant Counsel Patricia Okonta. “The AP African Americans Studies course has a research-backed curriculum that educates students about the important history, contributions, and perspectives of Black people in the United States—content that is already required by South Carolina law. The S.C. Department of Education’s decision undermines critical efforts to teach this important educational content and promote inclusive school climates. We urge the S.C. Department of Education to reverse its decision and reinstate the course credit for AP African American studies immediately.”

The S.C. Department of Education announced on June 4, 2024, that it would be removing the state course code that provides academic credit for AP African-American Studies, citing a South Carolina budget proviso and pending legislation that directly targets efforts to teach topics related to race and racism that center Black history and Black experiences. As explained in the letter, the decision contradicts current South Carolina state law, the Education Improvement Act of 1984, and state standards and processes for social studies curriculum. Furthermore, it reverses important progress the state has made in teaching historically accurate, racially inclusive K-12 curriculum. Copies of the letter were also sent to the South Carolina Board of Education and the State Education Oversight Committee.

“The S.C. Department of Education must resist the dangerous political attempts to ban and censor the accurate, truthful teaching of Black history. Instead, the Department should advance a statewide agenda that fosters inclusivity and actively encourages educators and students to engage in important discussions about Black history, culture, and experiences—an integral aspect of South Carolina and American history as a whole,” said LDF Senior Policy Counsel Hamida Labi. “Classrooms must not be used as pawns to silence the voices and deny the lived experiences of Black people in America. All South Carolinians benefit when teachers and students can take part in truthful, accurate public education. It is critically important that the Department restore course credit for AP African American Studies.”

The S.C. Department of Education asserts that school districts can still offer AP African American Studies as a “locally-approved honors course,” but this would place undue financial burden on districts and prevent students from being eligible for college credit. Other Black history courses are also noted to be deactivated for the upcoming school year, including Dual Enrollment Black Atlantic and African Diaspora (HIST 363); Dual Enrollment Studies in Black Feminism (AAST 333); and Dual Enrollment Black Women Writers (ENGL 315).

The letter was signed by [LDF](#), the [South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP](#), the [ACLU of South Carolina](#), [E3 Foundation](#), [Black Voters Matter](#), [Charleston Jewish Federation](#), [South Carolina Educators Association](#), and [AAUP South Carolina](#).

Read the full letter [here](#).

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Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.