

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1394

To authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to eligible entities to carry out educational programs that include the history of peoples of African descent in the settling and founding of America, the economic and political environments that led to the development, institutionalization, and abolition of slavery and its impact on all Americans, the exploration and expansion of America, impact on and contributions to the development and enhancement of American life, United States history, literature, the economy, politics, body of laws, and culture, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 26, 2021

Mrs. BEATTY (for herself, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. COOPER, Mr. SUOZZI, Mrs. DEMINGS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. EVANS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. HOULAHAN, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. CARSON, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. RUSH, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. BROWN, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. KILMER, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. BASS, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SIRES, Ms. MENG, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. POCAN, Mr. HORSFORD, and Ms. ROSS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

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## A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to eligible entities to carry out educational programs that include the history of peoples of African descent

in the settling and founding of America, the economic and political environments that led to the development, institutionalization, and abolition of slavery and its impact on all Americans, the exploration and expansion of America, impact on and contributions to the development and enhancement of American life, United States history, literature, the economy, politics, body of laws, and culture, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
 2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Black History is Amer-  
 5       ican History Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress finds the following:

8               (1) Whereas since before its founding, the  
 9       United States of America has benefited from and  
 10       been enhanced by the integral role African Ameri-  
 11       cans have played in our country’s history and con-  
 12       tributions to the world.

13              (2) Whereas African American history does not  
 14       begin in the Americas. It can be traced back to the  
 15       great empires of West Africa beginning in A.D. 790,  
 16       which aided the establishment and survival of colo-  
 17       nies in America and the New World, generally, and  
 18       fought against European oppression.

1           (3) Whereas African Americans have rep-  
2           resented a significant portion of the American popu-  
3           lation from nearly 20 percent at the signing of the  
4           Declaration of Independence, almost all of whom, if  
5           not all, were victims of the largest forced deporta-  
6           tions in recorded history, the transatlantic slave  
7           trade and resulting African diaspora. It is estimated  
8           over 10,000,000 free Africans were enslaved between  
9           the mid-fifteenth and nineteenth centuries during  
10          the diaspora.

11          (4) Whereas slavery was not abolished and Afri-  
12          can Americans not acknowledged as American citi-  
13          zens until the mid-nineteenth century, servitude did  
14          not abate their contributions to the settlement,  
15          growth, and development of the United States,  
16          which continued through Post-Reconstruction, Jim  
17          Crow, industrialization, World Wars and conflicts,  
18          innovation and inventiveness, constitutional  
19          progress, and every aspect of American society.

20          (5) Whereas during the civil rights movement of  
21          the 1950s and 1960s, civil rights leaders and activ-  
22          ists championed the fight for equal rights, including  
23          voting rights, for all African Americans.

24          (6) Whereas the seminal case of *Brown v.*  
25          *Board of Education*, decided May 17, 1954, found

1       that the decades old policy of separate but equal ac-  
2       cess to education was inherently unequal, and the  
3       segregation of Black public-school students was no  
4       longer the law of the land.

5           (7) Whereas African Americans continue to  
6       fight discrimination, structural racism, economic in-  
7       equities, and benign and overt omission of the inte-  
8       gral role they played in our country's rise to great-  
9       ness.

10          (8) Whereas currently, 12 States (Arkansas,  
11       California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey,  
12       New York, Michigan, Mississippi, Rhode Island,  
13       South Carolina, and Texas) have passed educational  
14       laws requiring Black history be incorporated into the  
15       curricula of all public schools.

16          (9) Whereas Congress established the National  
17       Museum of African American History and Culture  
18       in 2003 after decades of efforts to promote and  
19       highlight the contributions of African Americans,  
20       which serves as an indication of the national impor-  
21       tance of examining Black history. Since opening in  
22       2016, the museum has worked to educate the public  
23       on the American story through the lens of African  
24       American history and culture and provide educators,  
25       parents, caregivers, and students with tools and re-

1 sources on the African American experience, its na-  
2 tional impact, race, racism, and the importance of  
3 tolerance and inclusivity.

4 (10) Whereas according to a 2015 research  
5 study conducted by the National Museum of African  
6 American History and Culture and reported in Re-  
7 search into the State of African American History  
8 and Culture in K–12 Public Schools, key findings in-  
9 dicated that teachers considered Black history as in-  
10 fluent in understanding the complexity of United  
11 States history.

12 (11) Whereas the importance of Black history  
13 is reflected in the National Assessment of Edu-  
14 cational Progress United States History framework,  
15 from pre-colonization through contemporary Amer-  
16 ica.

17 (12) Whereas the Federal Government, through  
18 support for educational activities of national muse-  
19 ums established under Federal law, can assist teach-  
20 ers in efforts to incorporate historically accurate in-  
21 struction on the comprehensive history of African  
22 Americans and students in their exploration of Black  
23 history as an integral part of American history.

1 **SEC. 3. AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS EDUCATION.**

2 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—Section 2231(a) of the  
3 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20  
4 U.S.C. 6661(a)) is amended—

5 (1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by  
6 inserting “, which shall include Black history,” after  
7 “American history”; and

8 (2) in paragraph (2)—

9 (A) by inserting “which shall include Black  
10 history,” after “American history,”; and

11 (B) by inserting “, which shall include  
12 Black history” after “traditional American his-  
13 tory”.

14 (b) PRESIDENTIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL ACADEMIES  
15 FOR AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS.—Section 2232 of  
16 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20  
17 U.S.C. 6662) is amended—

18 (1) in subsection (a)—

19 (A) in paragraph (1), by inserting “, which  
20 shall include Black history,” after “American  
21 History”; and

22 (B) in paragraph (2), by inserting “, which  
23 shall include Black history,” after “American  
24 History”;

(2) in subsection (c)(1), by inserting “, which shall include Black history,” after “American history”;

(3) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting “, which shall include Black history,” after “American history”;

(ii) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by inserting “, which shall include Black history,” after “teachers of American history”; and

(II) by inserting “, which shall include Black history,” after “subjects of American history”; and

(iii) in subparagraph (B), by inserting “, which shall include Black history,” after “American history”;

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting “, which shall include Black history,” after “American history”; and

(C) in paragraph (4), by inserting “, and with the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture initiative providing programs and resources

1 for educators and students” after “National  
2 Parks”; and

3 (4) in subsection (f)—

4 (A) by inserting “, which shall include  
5 Black history,” after “American history”;

6 (B) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “,  
7 which shall include Black history,” after  
8 “American history”; and

9 (C) in subparagraph (B), by inserting “,  
10 which shall include Black history,” after  
11 “American history”.

12 (c) NATIONAL ACTIVITIES.—Section 2233 of the Ele-  
13 mentary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
14 6663) is amended—

15 (1) in subsection (a), by inserting “which shall  
16 include Black history,” after “American history”;  
17 and

18 (2) in subsection (b), by inserting “which shall  
19 include Black history,” after “American history”.

20 (d) NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL  
21 PROGRESS.—Section 303(b)(2)(D) of the National As-  
22 sessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act (20  
23 U.S.C. 9622(b)(2)(D)) is amended by inserting “(which  
24 shall include Black history)” after “history”.

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