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HB 7 (Avila) Individual Freedom is the companion bill to **SB 148 (Diaz) Individual Freedom**. Both bills are part of Gov. DeSantis' "Stop the Wrongs to Our Kids and Employees (WOKE) Act."

The House bill is moving quickly and we need you to **OPPOSE** it **TODAY** before it is heard in the State Affairs Committee tomorrow. This bill, like its companion in the Senate, is falsely portrayed as protecting individual freedoms and preventing discrimination in the workplace and in public schools. We sent an Action Alert several weeks ago for *SB 148* and all of the same talking points apply, so dust off your responses and use them for the House committee members below.

In case you don't have those talking points handy, I have included **background information disseminated by The Florida Student Power Network**. This dangerous bill seeks to:

- Amend the Florida Education Equity Act to allow discrimination and oppression of people of color, immigrant people, and gender diverse people in K-20 education systems (students and employees).
- Take the right away from all students to learn about systemic discrimination. The students who are directly impacted by systemic discrimination know about it by their lived experiences, but students who do not face these experiences still have the right to learn about how their peers have to navigate the world.
- Remove professional training for school staff in the areas of diversity and inclusion including: gender, cultural competency, privilege, inclusion, anti-racism, anti-discrimination, etc.
- Attempt to eliminate and foreclose the existence of people of various ethnicities (including Hispanic, Filipino, Pacific Islander, etc.) by removing the word ethnicity from education statutes and replacing it with the word color.
- Attempt to eliminate and foreclose the existence of people of gender diverse people by removing the word gender from education statutes and replacing it with the word sex.
- Prevent private business and state contractors from requiring trainings that respect and accommodate the diversity of their workforce.

In other words, Republicans don't want white/straight people to feel bad. The bill is modeled after the ex-President's highly controversial executive order (13950) signed in September 2020 that prohibited federal contractors from implementing training programs that promote "race and sex stereotyping and scapegoating." That order was extremely unpopular with businesses, blocked by a federal judge on First Amendment grounds, and eventually rescinded by President Biden's executive order. It is also one of many such egregious laws regarding teaching or training in businesses and/or schools that have been passed by many Republican state legislatures.

A Few Talking Points—

- Republicans constantly talk of freedom, which includes freedom of speech, yet they want to suppress free speech in our schools and businesses.
- We can pretend all we want that we don't have systemic racism or implicit bias in our society, but that doesn't take it away. We must address discrimination and have open conversations about its destructive ramifications.
- Our education is already woefully inadequate and inaccurate with respect to discrimination based on race and sex. How else is it possible that many individuals are now just learning about the past atrocities of the Oklahoma City massacre, the many injustices that individuals have faced—and continue to face-- in the housing, employment, and healthcare sectors due to race or gender bias, and many others? This bill will ensure that we make no progress and only regress.
- This bill is yet another Republican abomination destined to be fought in the courts through an expensive time-consuming process that wastes our tax dollars.

Please contact the following members of the House State Affairs Committee TODAY and tell them to **VOTE NO** on **HB 7 Individual Freedom**. I have grouped their emails below for easier cut/paste into your emails.

And when you are finished contacting legislators, please let the public know how their rights are being decimated by the Republican State Legislature. Write op-eds, letters-to-the-editor, social media postings, etc. Spread the word.

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