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**Education Advocates Threaten Lawsuit Against Georgia's Classroom
Censorship Law**

GEORGIA – Today, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), National Education Association (NEA) and Georgia Association of Educators (GAE) announced plans to file a federal lawsuit challenging Georgia's classroom censorship law – House Bill 1084 – signed by Gov. Brian Kemp on April 28, 2022.

The law prohibits the teaching of nine so-called “divisive concepts,” involving perceived criticisms of the United States' history with racism. Teachers, students and advocates argue that the law censors Georgia educators and limits the ability of students to receive a complete and accurate education.

In a [letter](#) sent on Nov. 4, the groups notified the Georgia Attorney General's Office of their intent to sue to safeguard the constitutional rights of students, teachers and communities throughout the state. The First Amendment provides students a right to receive information and ideas, which extends to classroom curriculum and school library books. The First Amendment and the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment prohibit punishing individuals for speech that the government has not clearly defined.

"As a classroom teacher I am confused and concerned about how this law will impact not only my classroom, but my career," said **AP World History teacher Jeff Corkill**. "Like many educators in Georgia, I can't figure out what I can or can't teach under the law, and my school district's administrators don't seem to understand the law's prohibitions either."

"Laws restricting students' access to accurate information are unconstitutional," said **SPLC Children's Rights Attorney Brock Boone**. "Educators across the state are worried they may lose their jobs for discussing race – an inescapable fact and intricate part of our society – and students' education will suffer. This vague law cannot stand."

"Efforts to expand our multicultural democracy through public education are being met with frantic efforts in Georgia to censor educators, ban books, and desperate measures to suppress teaching the truth about slavery and systemic racism," said **GAE General Counsel Mike McGonigle**. "GAE is Georgia's oldest professional educator organization. Its founders were formerly enslaved people who established the Georgia Teachers and Educators Association between 1876-1878. After Black Americans fought their way to liberation, they built schools and taught Black schoolchildren how to read and write, something they knew would expand their freedom. The 'divisive concepts' law attempts to erase this history and their voices."

A [recent report](#) by the NEA and the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance quotes several studies that found culturally responsive and racially inclusive curricula to be foundational for good citizenship and beneficial for all students.

“All students deserve a great public school education that imparts honesty about who we are and equips them with the knowledge and skills to reckon with our nation’s past and shape a better future,” said **NEA General Counsel Alice O’Brien**. “Instead of restricting the freedoms of students, and censoring and punishing educators, politicians should work with parents and educators to address the real issues facing our nation’s public schools, including the educator shortage crisis, educator pay, and morale. The more than 3-million NEA members stand with the Georgia Association of Educators and the Southern Poverty Law Center in defending the rights of educators to teach the truth of our history to all students, regardless of color, language, or ZIP code.”

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The [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people.

The [National Education Association](#) (NEA), the nation's largest professional employee organization, is committed to advancing the cause of public education. NEA's 3 million members work at every level of education—from pre-school to university graduate programs. NEA has affiliate organizations in every state and in more than 14,000 communities across the United States.

The [Georgia Association of Educators](#) (GAE) is a National Education Association (NEA) state affiliate. GAE is Georgia’s most experienced and effective professional organization for public school employees. With over 20,000 public school employees, GAE represents members before local school boards, state agencies, and the legislature. GAE promotes a diverse, inclusive, and equitable public education for all the students in Georgia. We’re the faces on education’s front line. We exist to support, protect, and strengthen those who nurture Georgia’s children. After all, our educational programs can be only as good as our educators. For us, standing up for education means standing up for teachers.