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## War over High School U.S. History

by Stanley Kurtz

Americans are only just waking up to a quiet but devastatingly effective effort to replace the teaching of traditional American history in our high schools with a new, centrally controlled, and sharply left-leaning curriculum. The College Board, the company that issues the SAT and the various Advanced Placement (AP) exams, has created an elaborate new framework for the AP U.S. History Exam that will effectively force nearly all American high schools, public and private, to transform the way they teach U.S. History.

The traditional emphasis on America's founders and the principles of constitutional government will soon be jettisoned in favor of a left-leaning emphasis on race, gender, class, ethnicity, etc. There are serious questions about the legality of the new AP U.S. History Exam, insofar as it may conflict with existing history standards in a number of states.

The new AP U.S. History Exam has been issued under the authority of David Coleman, president of the College Board and, not coincidentally, architect of the Common Core. We are witnessing a coordinated, two-pronged effort to effectively federalize all of American K-12 education, while shifting its content sharply to the left. A complete sample exam has been released, although only to certified AP U.S. History teachers. Those teachers have been warned, under penalty of law and the stripping of their AP teaching privileges,

not to disclose the content of the new sample AP U.S. History Exam to anyone. This is clearly an effort to silence public debate over these heavily politicized and illegitimately nationalized standards. The College Board has kept the test secret and threatened officially certified AP U.S. History teachers with severe penalties for revealing the test.

The College Board claims that its highly directive new framework for AP U.S. History is actually adaptable to the preferences of particular states, school districts, and teachers. This is deeply misleading. It is true that the new history framework allows teachers to include examples of their choice. Yet the framework also insists that the examples must be used to illustrate the themes and concepts behind the official College Board vision. The upshot is that James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and the other founders are largely left out of the new test, unless they are presented as examples of conflict and identity by class, gender, race, ethnicity, etc. The Constitution can be studied as an example of the Colonists' belief in the superiority of their own culture, for instance.

Any teacher who presents a full unit on the principles of the American Constitution taught in the traditional way would be severely disadvantaging his students. So while allowing some minor flexibility on details, the new AP U.S. History framework effectively forces teachers to train their students in a leftist, blame-America-first reading

of history, while omitting traditional treatments of our founding principles. The public should insist that the College Board release its heretofore secret sample AP U.S. History test for public scrutiny and debate. There is no excuse for withholding this test from the public.

Just as the Common Core became an established fact before most American parents, lawmakers, and school districts even knew it existed, the new AP U.S. History Exam is about to entrench a controversial and highly politicized national school curriculum without proper notice or debate. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and a full understanding of our founding principles are on the way out. Race, gender, class, and ethnicity are coming in, all in secrecy and in clear violation of the Constitution's guarantee that education remain in control of the states. The time to oppose the new AP U.S. History Exam is now.

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