

# Ban on Affirmative Action Part of Broader Wave of Racism in Education

African American academics are under fire along with curriculums which teach the factual history of the United States

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*When the conservative-dominated United States Supreme Court on June 29 ruled 6-3 that any program implemented in a higher educational setting which facilitates racial diversity and inclusion was a violation of the Constitution, the decision did not surprise many within the African American community.*

The decision involved Harvard and the University of North Carolina, the oldest private and public higher educational institutions in the United States.

With such a legal decision by the highest court in the land, it transmits a clear signal to all oppressed people that their presence within institutions of learning cannot be guaranteed under U.S. law. This ruling set the clock of civil rights and equal opportunity back decades to an era of legalized segregation and racial discrimination.

In fact, the historical attitude of the ruling class has always been to distort and outright falsify the legacy of national oppression, institutional racism and economic exploitation. Consequently, in a modern context, the denial of the existence of racism, national oppression and economic exploitation within a state which was built on such practices, is evidence of an attitude at the highest levels aimed at the further marginalization of African Americans and other People of Color Communities in the U.S.

This systematic denial of the impact of African enslavement; the destruction of the Indigenous peoples and their nations; Asian exclusionary legislation and super-exploitation of their labor; the theft of Mexican lands; the systematic discrimination against women and the waging of war to conquer the territories of other peoples; will only result in the further divisions within U.S. society. The subjugated peoples of the North American continent will

inevitably resort to their centuries-long tradition of resistance to overcome the barriers to their complete freedom and social emancipation.

Prior to the Supreme Court decision in late June, the rise in blatant discriminatory practices have been well documented in many regions throughout the country. In Florida, legislative and administrative policies have prohibited the recognition of enslavement and colonization as contributing factors in the social development of U.S. history. Compounding the already deceptive approach to the social studies within the K-12 educational settings, other information has emerged which mandates the teaching of students that African enslavement was beneficial in that it trained the people in skills which they would not otherwise have learned.

Such notions harken back to the myths which emerged during the colonial and antebellum slave period fostered by the ruling class. These ideas were designed to dehumanize the African people and therefore justify within the minds of the oppressors, the views that the enslaved were only property to be bought and sold as well as exploited.

With the outlawing of affirmative action these racist views will gain even more widespread acceptance in the corridors of schools, colleges and universities. A shift in admission policy accompanies the restrictions being placed on what can be taught about the actual history and social conditions of the U.S.

## African American Journalism Professor Compensated by Texas University after Blatant Racism

A former New York Times editor, Professor Kathleen McElroy, had chaired the journalism department at the University of Texas at Austin. McElroy was later recruited by the University of Texas A&M, the largest public higher educational institution in the U.S., to lead and revitalize the journalism program at the school.

# Why are we here???



Nonetheless, a campaign by some alumni and outside political forces began to raise concerns about McElroy's appointment due to her background of promoting racial diversity, equity and (DEI) within higher education. An internal inquiry unveiled that high-ranking officials at Texas A&M were involved in sabotaging the appointment of McElroy.

[In an article published by the Associated Press](#), it notes that:

"According to investigation documents released Thursday (June 29), those individuals included at least six board of regents members who began 'asking questions and raising concerns about McElroy's hiring' after Texas Scorecard, a right-leaning website, highlighted her past diversity, equity and inclusion work. The website's article 'generated numerous calls and emails to the President's Office at TAMU' from current and former students 'raising questions about why a DEI proponent would be hired to serve as director of the new journalism program,' a summary of the school investigation said. Shortly afterward, the university's president Katherine Banks and a school dean began discussing changes and reductions in the job offer to McElroy. McElroy told the (Texas) Tribune that the initial offer of a tenure-track position was reduced to a five-year post and then reduced again to a one-year position from which she could be fired at any time. She ultimately rejected the offer and withdrew her resignation from UT-Austin as a journalism professor."

When the withdrawal of the initial offer to McElroy at Texas A&M was exposed, President Banks resigned from the University. Later the school agreed to pay \$US1 million to Professor

McElroy for the harm done to her career. McElroy has returned to the U-T at Austin.

## These Incidents Are by No Means Isolated

The institutional handling of the situation at Texas A&M is reflective of the rightward shift within education from primary school through the university levels. These attacks on faculty members, students and curriculum development boards coincide with the increasing call for banning books by African Americans and other authors which are deemed progressive, left-wing and advancing the cause of an antiracist and just society.

[A Guardian newspaper article](#) observed this trend by emphasizing:

“During the 2020-2021 school year, over 900 districts nationwide suffered ‘an intentional campaign to restrict or ban’ anything deemed ‘critical race theory’, according to The Conflict Campaign. These districts represent 35% of all students in elementary, middle and high school. While we should organize to eliminate the elitist, profit-driven College Board from their schools, they ought to fight to introduce, protect and proliferate Black studies on campus.”

This report traces the demand for African American Studies to the upsurge in the Civil Rights and Black Power movements which arose during the 1960s where organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) created educational programs to raise awareness and political consciousness among the masses of people. During the Freedom Summer of 1964 in Mississippi, SNCC cadre instituted public courses in African American history which illustrated the struggle legacy of the formerly enslaved people.

In the aftermath of the Civil War and the failure of Reconstruction, the southern ruling class revived the black codes which prevailed during the colonial and antebellum slave era to ensure the continued exploitation and oppression of African Americans. Educational institutions which were segregated and underfunded in comparison to the predominantly white institutions, were monitored by the state and federal governments as a mechanism to limit the political organizing taking place among the Black people.

The Guardian goes on to say:

“This is not the first time that politicians have tried to ban Black studies curriculum and social movements education from schools and campuses. These bans have historically come on the heels of Black and multiracial uprisings in the streets. Academic deans and faculty committees have marginalized and ousted professors with radical politics. University and high school administrations are often antagonistic to departmentalizing Black studies programs. States cut funding for these programs and their professors while increasing funding for and the presence of policing. But fortunately, such repression has catalyzed resistance that birthed Black studies programs in the first place.”

Consequently, the recent wave of reaction in the aftermath of the mass demonstrations and rebellions of 2020 which were sparked by the police execution of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, among others, served as a catalyst for the suppression of real knowledge production and distribution. However, these events will not go unanswered by the African American people and their allies in the U.S.

The further isolation and alienation of the oppressed breeds mobilization and organization

geared towards greater freedom. History instructs that the destiny of the people cannot be curtailed by the racist institutions. These same exploited and downtrodden people have and will continue to fight against all forms of imposed inequality by the ruling class and the capitalist state.

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