

October 17, 2025

Submitted electronically via regulations.gov

Secretary Linda McMahon
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington D.C., 20202

Re: Comments on Proposed Priority and Definitions - Secretary's Supplemental Priority and Definitions on Promoting Patriotic Education

We, the undersigned, are among the more than 20,000 supporters of [We Hold These Truths](#), a community of pro-democracy leaders, artists, activists, executives, veterans, lawyers, legal scholars, and elected officials from across the ideological spectrum. We write to oppose the U.S. Department of Education's proposed and falsely named "[Promoting Patriotic Education](#)" priority and definitions.

Our nation's strength has always come from the truths we hold to be self-evident: personal freedom, equality, democracy and elections, the rule of law, and separation of powers. We base our opposition to the proposal firmly on these enduring truths and democratic principles that govern public education and public life.

Freedom of Expression

Freedom in education means the freedom to learn honestly, where education must allow critical inquiry and reflection. This proposal represents an unprecedented act of federal overreach into local curriculum by seeking to use federal funding to impose an ideologically skewed narrative of American history. To hold freedom as a truth means allowing communities, classrooms, and educators to teach about America in full – a nation of many traditions that beautifully form the rich, melting pot of American history and culture, from the noble parts of its past to its complex and painful legacies.

Equality

Equality requires that every student, teacher, educator, and community have a voice in how we understand our shared history. Our differences are our strength, not our weakness. This proposal continues a troubling pattern of censorship by the Department and demonstrates an intent to coerce schools and educators to adopt ideological educational objectives. Silencing honest and necessary conversations about race, faith, gender, and justice is not equality – it is erasure.

Democracy

Our democracy functions and thrives best when Americans can debate ideas and learn from our many perspectives. The proposal reveals a narrow ideological bias that distorts and ignores the richness and complexity of our country's past. We undermine the pluralism that defines American democracy when we name one tradition as central and omit others. Our civic education must help students consider struggle, contradiction, and complexity.

If "patriotic education" is only taught as pride without reflection, we fail to prepare the next generation to safeguard our democracy.

Rule of Law

To preserve liberty, fairness, and the stability of our democratic society, the exercise of power by the government and other actors must be limited by law. If adopted, this proposal would create a chilling effect on inclusive and accurate instructions of American history in classrooms nationwide. Teachers and school districts, fearful of losing crucial funding or being labeled "unpatriotic," may censor discussions. That is not rule of law, but rather a rule by fear, and would diminish the integrity of our education system. Our education system cannot teach students to cherish liberty if we deny their teachers the liberty to teach the truth.

We Hold These Truths reminds us of a simple but profound vision: the freedoms, equalities, and rights promised in our Constitution belong to everyone.

The proposal would take us backward to a time when some voices defined what America meant for everyone else.

We strongly urge the Department to withdraw this proposal and reaffirm its commitment to a public education system grounded not in prescriptive and revisionist ideology, but in freedom, equality, democracy, and the rule of law - truths that make up a healthy cornerstones of our democracy and nation.

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