

# CIVICS AT THE LEGISLATURE

Texas Democrats walked off the House floor late Sunday night, preventing the passage of voter suppression bill SB 7. The latest version of the bill text specifically targeted Souls to the Polls initiatives and eligibility to vote by mail, in addition to provisions criminalizing small mistakes and empowering partisan pollwatchers to intimidate voters.

SB 7 had been a priority for Texas Republicans, and Governor Greg Abbott has already warned that he will add it to a special session agenda. But these attacks on voting rights are not new or unique to Texas: a recent Heritage foundation video made clear this session's tide of legislation is part of a coordinated attack on voting rights, and Texas has repeatedly violated the Voting Rights Act.

Anti-civics bill HB 3979 passed the legislature last week after appearing to be killed in the House, with Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick resorting to an unprecedented procedural maneuver that some argue was unconstitutional. The bill now heads to the governor in the form originally passed by the House, with a laundry list of required readings, prohibitions against certain forms of civic engagement, and language silencing conversations about race and discrimination in the classroom.

For years students and teachers have been advocating for curriculums which teach truths about slavery, race, and oppression that are culturally responsive. HB 3979 instead seeks to maintain an inaccurate mythology that scholars and historians agree follows a long-standing effort to whitewash history. It is particularly concerning that testimony against the bill from students, teachers, and people of color was ignored and silenced.

The bill can be found here.



## TX CIVIC EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2021

This legislative session was exhausting for many as attacks on voting rights, civics education, and transgender youth dominated over issues like our energy grid and healthcare. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick called for Gov. Greg Abbott to call a special session over the failed transgender youth sports ban, taxpayer funded lobbying, and social media censorship, and the Governor has already warned that voter suppression will be back on the agenda after the Democrats killed anti-voter SB 7.

We will continue to fight for the rights of all children and inclusive, accurate, and comprehensive civic education both in and out of session. Our youth deserve to feel safe, seen, and valued, not ostracized and unheard.

1. Houston in Action is hosting a legislative wrap-up on June 8th from 1-3p. Register here.
2. Nonprofit VOTE is hosting a webinar about how to engage voters this year after COVID and a highly consequential general election. The event will be on June 10th at 1p. Click here to register.
3. Join the National Conference on Citizenship to learn about locally-driven plans to increase voter turnout & civic participation by an inaugural cohort of Democracy Fellows.

Click here to add someone to or unsubscribe from our mailing list. Want to see your announcement in next month's newsletter? Contact **Maggie Stern** at [mstern@childrensdefense.org](mailto:mstern@childrensdefense.org).



# TEACHING THROUGH A CRISIS

As teachers finish out a unique and difficult school year, they face the responsibility of teaching through the ongoing democratic crisis and supporting their students to become lifelong civic participants. We welcome you to use these free resources shape an inclusive and culturally competent classroom.

## Asian Americans Advancing Justice

This organization has created 36 [lesson plans](#) examining Asian American history for both history and ELA classrooms.

## Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit

Developed by a coalition of Asian American grassroots organizations,, Grassroots Asian Rising, [this toolkit](#) seeks to address systemic racism in a highly intersectional way, including examinations of gender, colonialism, Islam, and more.

## Learning for Justice

As we come into Pride Month following legislative attacks on our trans youth, it is important that our classrooms be inclusive. [Here](#) you can find guidance from Learning for Justice on serving LGBTQ+ students in the classroom.

## 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Commission

100 years after the deadly event that destroyed Black Wall Street, we still have not fully addressed or taught the racism in our country. The [lesson plan](#) includes photos, vocabulary, and some questions. Alternatively, students can watch a [20 minute video](#).

## Reading is Resistance

During the HB 3979 Senate floor debate, the book "Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness" was touted as discriminatory and divisive. In actuality, it is a book which aims to teach white children about how to dismantle white supremacy. Click [here](#) for a lesson plan on the book.

\*These resources are still being updated and not every link in each guide has been vetted by CDF-Texas. Please exercise discretion in identifying relevant & culturally responsive resources. Read more about intentional and equity-focused teaching in this moment [here](#).