

2018 NCSS House of Delegates Resolutions

The House of Delegates (HOD) provides a forum for the general membership of NCSS, as represented by state councils, communities, and associated groups, to bring ideas, principles, beliefs, and actions regarding social studies education to the attention of the NCSS Board of Directors. Resolutions are the framework through which the NCSS membership at-large makes recommendations to the Board.

Any NCSS member may submit a resolution following the guidelines established in the House of Delegates Manual. Resolutions are debated and voted on during HOD meeting at the NCSS Annual Conference. Resolutions that are passed by the HOD are discussed and voted on by the Board of Directors following the annual conference at the Board's winter meeting. During this meeting, the Board discusses each resolution to determine if it will help NCSS reach its short- and long-term strategic goals. Staff begins working on implementing the resolutions passed by the Board of Directors as soon as possible and feasible during the current and incoming fiscal years.

The resolutions approved by the NCSS Board of Directors at its Winter 2019 meeting are the following:

Resolution #18-01-1

Building Stronger Reciprocal Relationships

Sponsor: Iowa Council for the Social Studies

Co-Sponsors: Colorado Council for the Social Studies, Florida Council for the Social Studies, Middle States Council for the Social Studies, Nebraska State Council for the Social Studies, Oklahoma Council for the Social Studies, Washington State Council for the Social Studies

Rationale: To improve social studies education in the United States, all social studies groups need to work more collaboratively and reciprocally in order to create more effective organizations with greater capacity to advocate and promote social studies education.

WHEREAS: the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the affiliated councils, the associated groups, and the communities have a shared purpose in improving social studies education; and

WHEREAS: each organization and group brings strengths and abilities that can be utilized by all to improve social stud-

ies education; and

WHEREAS: each organization and group has a leadership team which can benefit from greater collaboration across all organizations; and

WHEREAS: NCSS is well situated to facilitate more collaborative and reciprocal relationships; and

WHEREAS: we are all stronger when we pull together and help each other;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the NCSS Board of Directors and staff work to leverage the strengths, skills, and personnel of the affiliated councils, associated groups and communities to build stronger collaborative relationships among and between NCSS, the affiliated councils, the associated groups, and the communities.

Resolution #18-01-2

Urging NCSS to Explore the Integration of Its Contemporary Position Statements, Mission and Policies into Official Guides to all Official Social Studies Related Standards, Frameworks and Guides

Sponsor: NCSS Human Rights Education Community

Co-Sponsors: Connecticut Council for the Social Studies, Florida Council for the Social Studies, Oklahoma Council for the Social Studies

Rationale: The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has made significant progress in the identification of critical issues, practices, and content areas in the social studies since the most recent adoption of social studies standards and the C3 Framework. NCSS is continuing to develop statements of policy and guides to practice. It is important that all such statements and guides be developed with attention to NCSS statements of position so that these positions will be reflected when NCSS speaks authoritatively.

WHEREAS: the National Council for the Social Studies provides leadership and service for all social studies educators, to support them as they teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy; and

WHEREAS: in connection with this mission NCSS has developed content standards, standards for preparation of teachers, the C3 Framework, and various guides and publica-

tions to assist, support, and reflect the knowledge and skills of its member educators; and

WHEREAS: in addition to these standards, frameworks, and publications, NCSS has periodically adopted Position Statements to describe with greater clarity and detail significant issues, practice, and content areas in social studies—such as education about American Indigenous Peoples, human rights, religious studies, and civic revitalization—which should inform the field of social studies education and the programs through which future social studies educators are prepared for their profession; and

WHEREAS: without a conscious effort of coordination and integration, there is a significant risk that positions adopted by NCSS in one venue will fail to be reflected in documents developed by NCSS or under NCSS authorization which guide the teaching of social studies and the preparation of social studies educators;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the NCSS House of Delegates, on behalf of all the communities, associated groups, and affiliated programs within NCSS, request the NCSS Board of Directors and staff to develop protocols and work with the various communities of interest within NCSS to ensure that the Position Statements, and other statements officially adopted by NCSS, and the priorities expressed by NCSS's growing communities of interest are reflected in NCSS's ongoing work in revisiting, updating, and expanding its standards, frameworks, guides, and other professional resources.

Resolution #18-02-1

Support of Curricular Promotion of Women in History and Current Events and for Their Respectful Treatment

Sponsor: College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA)

Co-Sponsors: Connecticut Council for the Social Studies, Florida Council for the Social Studies, Maine Council for the Social Studies, Human Rights Education Community

Rationale: The increasing attention of publicity that concerns the marginalization of women presents a wake-up call to the social studies education community. As Schmeichel (2015) observes,

If you think that we are living in a post-sexist world, you are wrong. Gender inequality is not something we have moved beyond. Indeed, these recent conversations about sexism and gender inequality in our country are not pointing to a new phenomenon. (p.2)

The message presented by national political and professional leadership appears to be one of economics, denial, and payoff. Jennifer Newsom's documentary, *Miss Representation* (2011), describes how media giants profit through the exploi-

tation of girls and women who seek attention and fame, while marginalizing efforts of women producers who seek to counter the trend. Chris Hedges (2010) describes how relationships between commonly recognized corporations and the adult entertainment business create an environment in which society accepts such objectification. Indeed, media coverage of President Trump's extramarital relationships tends to focus on efforts to conceal the trysts, rather than the failure of a national leader to practice relational fidelity.

Teaching children, adolescents, and young adults about citizenship involves a certain amount of honor and respect. Yet, as Vickery (2017) observes,

The construct of citizenship is a site of political and social struggle... It is also a social construct and discursive process that has changed over time to exclude certain bodies from belonging and participating as legitimate members of a nation-state. (pp. 318–319)

Social studies education should not condone the explicit and implicit degradation of women. To stay silent on the issue or pretend that the problem does not exist affirms the current environment and the conditions that contribute to its presence.

WHEREAS: contributions of women to the development of human civilization have significance that merit as much acclaim as the influences of men; and

WHEREAS: state academic standards and textbooks present the contributions of women to society from additive and contributions approaches and minimize coverage of the patterns of injustices towards women and the rights and responsibilities of societies for their just treatment; and

WHEREAS: patriarchal social views represent social constructions that derive, in part, from misunderstandings of religious scripture (e.g., Borg & Crossan, 2009; Pateman, 1990); and

WHEREAS: curricular materials that relate to women's accomplishments tend to emphasize technical objectives rather than women's social accomplishments (Schmeichel, 2015); and

WHEREAS: the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has expressed little or no advocacy for the development or advancement of curricula that uphold the citizen rights of women and for their respectful treatment in the United States and in other nations; and

WHEREAS: the lack of information and guidance could lead teachers to perpetuate myths, misconceptions, and stereotypical conceptions of young girls and women that contribute to their objectification through media and other forms of mass communication; and

WHEREAS: the development of campaigns such as “#metoo” have confirmed a pattern of exploitation of women within social contexts; and

WHEREAS: the increasing attention on the role of women in the political processes of the United States calls for more focused learning about gender and political power;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that NCSS issue a position statement in favor of curricular promotion of women in history and current events; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that NCSS endorse efforts to promote and empower the rights of young girls and women in the classroom and in society.

References

- Borg, M. and J.D. Crossan, *The First Paul. Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon*. New York, N.Y.: Harpercollins, 2009.
- Hedges, C. *Empire of Illusion. The End of Literacy and Triumph of Spectacle*. New York, N.Y.: Nationbooks, 2010.
- Newsom, J.S. *Miss Representation* (Documentary Video). San Francisco, Calif.: Ro*co Films Educational; Girls Club Entertainment, 2011.
- Pateman, C. *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Schmiechel, M. "Skirting around Critical Feminist Rationales for Teaching Women in Social Studies," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 43, no.1 (2015): 1–27.
- Vickery, A.E. "You Excluded Us for so Long and Now You Want Us to Be Patriotic?": African American Women Teachers Navigating the Quandary of Citizenship," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 45, no. 3 (2017): 318–348.

Resolution # 18-03-1

Advocating Improved Holocaust Education and the Provision of Necessary Resources

Sponsor: Florida Council for the Social Studies

Co-Sponsors: Colorado Council for the Social Studies, Connecticut Council for the Social Studies, Wisconsin Council for the Social Studies, Human Rights Education Community

Rationale: Recent events in Florida, Virginia, and elsewhere in the United States have raised questions about the ways in which we as educators approach and teach the events of the Holocaust.¹ As of 2017, only eight states mandate instruction on the Holocaust, and increasingly we as citizens and educators are losing access to those survivors and eyewitnesses, living primary sources who can serve as resources for education and remembrance.² Research suggests that in *some* cases, when it *is* taught, the approach often focuses on shock value and shallow interpretations rather than roots and policies. At the same time, the Holocaust is often approached as a "controversial issue" that requires "balance."³ As social studies educators, we have an obligation to understand what we are teaching to confront the facts of events like the Holocaust. Educators must be knowledgeable, understand the purpose and function of Holocaust education, and use age-appropriate materials to ensure that students gain a comprehensive understanding of this dark time in world history.⁴

WHEREAS: anti-Semitic acts of violence are on the rise in the United States, reaching nearly 2,000 unique events in 2017, according to the Anti-Defamation League⁵; and

WHEREAS: in contradiction to the limited state policies that do exist, some district and school administrations throughout the country have suggested that educators approach the Holocaust as a "controversial issue" that requires "balance," while general knowledge about the Holocaust continues to decline; and

WHEREAS: a number of excellent, proven, and grade-level appropriate resources exist for teaching about the Holocaust; and

WHEREAS: the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has an obligation to support accurate quality instruction and to support members in the field;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that NCSS support the teaching of the Holocaust as an absolute fact without mitigating circumstances that require a consideration of "balance"; establish a clearinghouse of resources and instructional tools on **socialstudies.org** that can be used to teach about the Holocaust; support professional development opportunities that will improve teacher understanding of the Holocaust; and support a 50-state effort to mandate quality K-12 Holocaust education.

Notes

1. Colleen Wright and Marlene Sokol, "What Teachers Can and Can't Say. Did a Citrus County Educator's Podcast Cross the Line?" *Tampa Bay Times* (March 6 2018), www.tampabay.com/news/education/k12/What-teachers-can-and-cant-say-Did-a-Citrus-County-educator-s-podcast-cross-the-line-_166092840 and Emma Green, "Why the Charlottesville Marchers Were Obsessed with Jews," *The Atlantic* (August 15, 2017), www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/nazis-racism-charlottesville/536928/
2. New Campaign Seeks to Mandate Holocaust Education in all 50 States, www.nothelastbutterfly.com/50-state-initiative.html
3. Louis Llovio, "Teaching the Complexities of the Holocaust a Challenge for Teachers," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (Oct. 25, 2015), www.richmond.com/news/local/education/city-of-richmond/teaching-the-complexities-of-the-holocaust-a-challenge-for-teachers/article_83ad4ee0-a0b9-5646-a644-6e7abfd37f08.html; Aleksander Kwasniewski, "On Holocaust Education" Opinion, *The New York Times* (June 28, 2010), www.nytimes.com/2010/06/29/opinion/29iht-edcounter.html and Maggie Astor, "Holocaust Is Fading From Memory, Survey Finds," *The New York Times* (April 12, 2018), www.nytimes.com/2018/04/12/us/holocaust-education.html.
4. D. Lindquist, "A Necessary Holocaust Pedagogy: Teaching the Teachers," *Issues in Teacher Education* 16, no. 1 (2007): 21–36. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ796255.pdf>
5. 2017 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, www.adl.org/resources/reports/2017-audit-of-anti-semitic-incidents

Resolution #18-04-5

Expressing the Commitment of the National Council for the Social Studies and Its Members to Resist Furthering or Legitimizing the Detention of Migrant Children or Their Separation from Their Families, in Violation of International and Domestic Law, and to Employ the Skills of Civic Literacy to Help Students Evaluate and Respond to Actions by Any Government that Violates Fundamental Human Rights of Children and Families

Sponsors: NCSS Human Rights Education Community

Co-Sponsor: Maine Council for the Social Studies

Rationale: In a time when fundamental principles necessary to the maintenance of a participatory, diverse democratic society are called into question at the highest levels of government, social studies educators have a special responsibility and a particular challenge faithfully to engage their students in the study of the principles, laws, treaties, and constitutional provisions which underlie this nation and the larger global society, and to encourage their students to explore contemporary events in light of those principles.

WHEREAS: the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is committed, as outlined in its Mission Statement, to provide “leadership, service and support” for social studies educators as they fulfill their calling to “teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy”; and

WHEREAS: declarations which the United States has approved and treaties it has ratified require that all persons be recognized as “equal before the law,” and be treated “with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person”;¹ that the family as “the natural and fundamental group unit of society” receive “protection by society and the State”;² and that every child be accorded “special care and assistance” and “the right to such measures of protection as are required by his status as a minor”;³ and

WHEREAS: recent policies and practices undertaken and carried out by various agencies of the government of the United States, particularly the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, notwithstanding these declarations, treaties, and policies of domestic law, have broken apart many migrant families and have subjected their minor children to grievous harm through detention and through separation from their parents or custodial family members; and

WHEREAS: social studies educators are, by the very nature of their profession, involved in educating children about the institutions through which this nation and its subdivisions are governed and “to provide instruction which instills commitment to democratic values and faith in the dignity and worth of the individual,”⁴ and to educate their students “about their human rights and their responsibility to uphold and protect the rights of others, in all circumstances”;⁵

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that NCSS declare its condemnation of the use of the power of any state, including the power of the United States, to inflict physical and/or emotional harm on minors or to separate families because they are migrant persons whose status is not yet determined to conform to U.S. law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that NCSS urge its members and social studies educators everywhere not to participate knowingly in actions furthering the detention of migrant children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that NCSS disavow and repudiate any intentional or willfully ignorant misrepresenta-

tion of civic principles, constitutional provisions, laws, treaties, traditions, and histories for the purpose of justifying the separation of migrant families or the detention of migrant children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that NCSS recognize and defend both the right and the responsibility of its members and of social studies educators everywhere to provide students with an honest civic education, based upon the principles, constitutional provisions, laws, treaties, and civic values that support the maintenance of a diverse, participatory democratic society.

Notes

1. ICCPR*, Art. 10, 26; CERD**, Art. 5; Geneva Conventions I-IV, Common Article III
 2. UDHR***, Art. 16, ICCPR, Art. 23
 3. UDHR, Art. 25, ICCPR, Art. 24
 4. NCSS Code of Ethics, Principle 2 (A)
 5. NCSS Position Statement on Human Rights Education
- * ICCPR - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
** CERD- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
*** UDHR - Universal Declaration of Human Rights
ICCPR, CERD, and Geneva Conventions I-IV are all treaties ratified by the United States.

Courtesy resolutions were also passed in recognition of the service of NCSS President India Meissel, Local Arrangements Co-Chairs Mary Ellen Daneels and Heather Van Benthuysen, and local school and district administrators who support educators being able to attend NCSS meetings and activities. 🌍