



September 28, 2016

Donna Bahorich, Chair [donna.bahorich@tea.texas.gov]  
Texas State Board of Education  
Texas Education Agency  
William B. Travis State Office Building  
1700 N. Congress Ave.  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Chairperson Bahorich:

I write in my capacity as president of the Organization of American Historians (OAH). Our organization is more than a century old and the largest professional society dedicated to the teaching and study of the history of the United States. Our members are college and university professors, K-12 teachers, public historians and others interested in full and accurate views of the American past. The organization's mission is to promote excellence in the scholarship, teaching, and presentation of American history, and to encourage wide discussion of historical questions and the equitable treatment of all practitioners of history.

Our Executive Committee, composed of the current and past presidents and president-elect of the organization, has become aware of the Ad Hoc Committee Report on a Proposed Social Studies Special Topic Textbook, *Mexican American Heritage*, submitted by Ruben Cortez, Jr., and also with the Ad Hoc Committee's Statement of Concern.

The criticisms raised in that report and statement point out defects in the proposed textbook so serious that we write to urge you to reject the possibility of Texas schools using *Mexican American Heritage* at all. The large number and the type of errors in the proposed textbook make it unacceptable. I note especially the Ad Hoc Committee's statement that the proposed textbook uses "politically charged, intolerant, and highly offensive opinions that often stand in place of facts and well-substantiated interpretations of historical phenomena."

We are aware that the American Historical Association has sent a similar letter of concern with a similar recommendation to reject *Mexican American Heritage*. The Organization of American Historians joins its sister organization in our opposition to the use of a textbook that so fails to meet the expressed professional standards of historical practice.

Sincerely,

Nancy F. Cott  
President  
and Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History, Harvard University