



**STATE BOARD of EDUCATION  
PUBLIC HEARING – STATE TEXTBOOK ADOPTION 2002  
August 23, 2002  
Chris Patterson, Director of Education Research**

**I. Purpose of Testimony:**

To report publishers' responses to the Foundation's review of social studies textbooks proposed for adoption this fall.

**II. Background:**

The Texas Public Policy Foundation commissioned experts to review 28 social studies textbooks submitted for the State's Conforming List (meeting all state curriculum requirements) in grades 6 through 8 and high school. Textbooks were examined for errors and evaluated to determine how well proposed textbooks meet state curriculum requirements.

Each textbook was reviewed by two individuals – a social studies teacher and a university scholar. The group of 16 reviewers compiled a list of errors and critical historical omissions that is published on the Foundation's web site (<http://www.tppf.org>).

With a few exceptions, reviewers found the textbooks adequate, meeting state requirements for classroom learning. An error report, listing 533 factually incorrect statements, was submitted to the Texas Education Agency and the publishers.

**III. Publishers' Response to the Textbook Error Report:**

Publishers addressed 65 percent of the errors noted by reviewers. For 351 of the 533 errors identified, publishers agreed to either revise statements to correct factual inaccuracies or to add clarifying statements to rectify ambiguity. Publishers had already identified 28 of these errors and submitted changes to the TEA prior to the release of the Foundation's review.

### **-Correcting Errors and Adding Essential Information-**

Two of the five publishers addressed over 80 percent of the errors in their textbooks that were identified by our reviewers. Harcourt addressed 85 % of errors in the one textbook reviewed and Prentice Hall addressed 82% in six textbooks. Prentice Hall deserves recognition for the most improved textbooks in four of the six different subject areas (Grade 6 World Cultures, Grade 7 Texas History, High School American History after Reconstruction, and High School American Government). Changes made by Prentice Hall represent substantial improvements with additional information to clarify and expand the text; examples of these textual modifications are appended to this testimony.

### **-Refuting Errors and Dismissing Recommendations for Improving Texts-**

Errors were refuted by all publishers for several reasons:

- ✓ In a few cases, publishers made convincing arguments that detail different facts by different experts and cited sources; however, in these cases, publishers did not agree to note in the textbook that expert sources disagree on the facts;
- ✓ In many cases, publishers denied that the information was incorrect and stated that the reviewers misunderstood the textbook; however, in these cases, publishers did not modify the text to ensure students would not fall victim to the same misunderstanding suffered by scholars and teachers who reviewed the texts; and
- ✓ When reviewers noted that textbooks failed to provide the facts needed to fully satisfy TEKS, publishers challenged the reviewers' interpretation of TEKS and the texts.

### **IV. The Challenge of Defining Errors in Social Studies Textbooks:**

Publisher responses clearly identify broad differences of opinion as to what constitutes a factual error. A definition of factual error that is adopted by the State Board is critically needed to ensure quality textbooks and a fair process for state textbook adoptions.

According to the Random House Webster's College Dictionary, an error is "a deviation from accuracy or correctness." Fact is defined as "something that actually exists" or "something known to exist or have happened." These definitions reveal the problem; accuracy and facts, like beauty, will remain in the eyes of the beholder until expectations are explicitly defined.

### **V. Recommendations:**

- The Board should adopt a definition of factual error, a definition that recognizes factual errors can be caused by ambiguous statements, partial information or biased statements that distort an objective understanding of the facts.

The words of John Locke, a seventeenth century English philosopher, offer the Board wisdom: "It is one thing to show a man that he is in an error, and another to put him in possession of truth."

Textbooks should identify what is true – verified and undisputed fact—while acknowledging conjecture, theory, interpretation and academic disagreement.

- The Board should ask publishers to address the ambiguous, incomplete or biased

statements, as well as to identify the statements that represent theory or conjecture as fact, that remain uncorrected in the textbooks proposed for adoption.

- The Board should revise and clarify the Social Studies TEKS since scholars, social studies teachers, Agency review panels, and publishers disagree on the information required to satisfy state curriculum requirements.
- The Board should ask the Commissioner to charge a public university or appoint a group of independent scholars to evaluate textbook content – to determine how well textbooks meet state curriculum requirements and make this information available to school districts to assist in local textbook selections.
- Lastly, the Board should ask the Texas Legislature to restore its authority over textbook content to ensure textbooks are accurate, comprehensive and fully meet state requirements.

## **VI. Conclusion:**

Response of publishers to the social studies textbook review is disappointing. With the exception of Prentice Hall, most publishers declined significant opportunities to improve textbooks by clarifying ambiguity, identifying the difference between opinion and fact, describing conflicting viewpoints of experts, and adding the information required for objective reporting of history.

While publishers dispute many of the errors that reviewers identified – and some arguments are convincing – the simple fact that experts (textbook editors, social studies teachers and university scholars) disagree about what constitutes textbook error represents the strongest argument for revising and clarifying the sections, or at least acknowledging, where experts disagree.

Most of the proposed social studies textbooks need to be improved if students are to be equipped with high quality instructional materials, according to the Foundation’s reviewers.

High quality textbooks are essential because textbooks largely determine classroom instruction, particularly in classrooms led by novice teachers or by teachers teaching out of their subject area. In Texas, where 30 percent of teachers are teaching out of their field and a third has less than five years experience, academically strong textbooks are a necessity.

Academic improvements now demanded of students in Texas public schools also depend on high quality textbooks. As Texas implements new policies to end social promotion, no effort should be spared to address the unacceptably high failure rate on state social studies assessments - approximately one of four students fails the grade 8 and high school American history assessments.

I urge members of the State Board of Education to closely examine petitions for textbook improvement and to ensure social studies texts are academically comprehensive and have factual integrity.

## **APPENDED:**

1. Exemplary Publisher Responses
2. Tables-Summary of Publisher Response to Social Studies Textbook Review

### **APPENDIX 1. EXEMPLARY PUBLISHER RESPONSES**

#### **Example 1. Prentice Hall: High School American Government**

**Reviewer Note 20.** p. 570 – The book should devote more discussion to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. There is ample scholarship on both sides of the issue to support different interpretations. Discussion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment should also make use of Locke’s treatise. Remember Locke, upon which the Americans base their doctrine of revolution, contends that if governments become tyrannical the people should attempt to alter that government first through peaceful means. If all these attempts fail, armed revolution may be the only recourse. The placement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment immediately after the 1<sup>st</sup> (our ability to criticize and protest against the government) implies that the right to bear arms is conceived of by the Founders as part of the means of resisting tyrannical government. To what extent this can be achieved solely through the strength of the state militia is debatable. Given the increase in Federal power over the last 200 years, and increased efforts to regulate gun ownership, this topic merits more discussion than the five small paragraphs devoted to it here. On a related note, page 772 interprets the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment without giving any consideration to differing interpretations. The text provides a collectivist interpretation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment without giving any consideration to differing interpretations. The 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment has taken on a more individualistic definition, particularly in light of recent circuit court cases and the changes in the presidency, and the strength of the NRA in terms of membership and influence leads credence to at least exploring this alternative interpretation.

#### **Publisher’s Response:**

Add to T [teachers’] E [edition] p. 570:

#### **“Background Note-Constitutional Issues**

In November 2001, Attorney General John Ashcroft informed attorneys working for the National Government of a shift in policy regarding the 2nd Amendment. In the past, U.S. attorneys had argued that the 2nd Amendment referred primarily to a collective right based on state militias. Ashcroft wrote that U.S. attorneys were to argue in weapons-related court cases that the 2nd Amendment was intended to protect an

individual's right to keep and bear arms. The new policy was apparent in a letter that Solicitor General Theodore Olson wrote to the Supreme Court in May 2002 regarding a challenge to a District of Columbia law. Olson wrote, "The current position of the United States is that the 2nd Amendment more broadly protects the rights of individuals . . . to possess and bear their own firearms, subject to reasonable restrictions."

Change S [students'] E [edition] page 571, first column, first two paragraphs to:

"Many argue that the 2nd Amendment also sets out an individual right. In this view, the amendment guarantees a right to keep and bear arms just as, for example, the 1st Amendment guarantees freedom of speech. This interpretation rests partly on Locke's Second Treatise on Government, which says that people have the right to overthrow a tyrannical government when peaceful means fail. Armed individuals may be a more effective deterrent to tyranny than a state militia.

The Supreme Court has not accepted this interpretation. In *United States v. Miller*, 1939, the Court upheld part of a federal law that outlawed shipping sawed-off shotguns, machine guns, or silencers between States unless the shipper had registered them with the Treasury Department and paid a \$200 fee. The Court ruled there was no reasonable link between these weapons and "the preservation . . . of a well-regulated militia."

S [students'] E [edition] page 772, 2nd Amendment Commentary, has been changed on errors list submitted to TEA to "The right of the people to keep and bear arms was insured by the 2nd Amendment."

### **Example 2. Prentice Hall: High School American History after Reconstruction**

**Reviewer Note 19.** p. 332-336 T,S The book's coverage of segregation is generally well done. With respect to voting restrictions there are several omissions that detract from the overall picture. The effort to restrict voting by African Americans is taken entirely out of context. First, disfranchisement needs to be understood as a reaction to Populism, but from this it is disconnected. Second, disfranchisement was aimed at destroying any possible coalition of poor whites and blacks, so the book needs to point out that such restrictions were as much aimed at poorer whites as blacks. The chart provided contains an error: Mississippi was the originator of disfranchisement beginning in 1890, and utilized *all* of the impediments listed. The coverage also suffers from a critical oversight—it does not discuss the "white primary" system, which established a one-party Democratic South, all but destroyed the GOP in the region, and insured that African Americans could not vote in the one election that mattered.

## Publisher's Response:

S [students] E [edition] page 333, regarding the chart: the original sources of this chart, *The American Record: Images of the Nation's Past*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982, p. 163) and J. Morgan Kousser's *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) does not indicate that Mississippi used the grandfather clause or the property qualification. Mississippi did use the "understanding clause," which required voters to demonstrate an understanding of any section of the constitution by explaining what the section means, and the secret ballot. The Constitution of Mississippi indicates that a poll tax and a literacy test were once required, but specifies no other measures. Other tactics may have been used locally; but the chart includes only major, state-wide initiatives.

S [students'] E [edition] page 333, paragraph 2. Change paragraph 2 to read: "In many southern communities, whites were concerned that African Americans would gain too much political power if they were allowed to vote. Also, they feared that black voters would unite with poor white farmers and elect Populist candidates. As a result, during the 1890s southern states began using several tactics to deny the vote to blacks. Some states required voters to own property or pay a **poll tax**, a special fee that must be paid before a person was permitted to vote. Most African Americans found both requirements difficult to meet. Voters also had to pass literacy tests that showed that they could read, write, and meet minimum standards of knowledge. But, like the property requirement and poll tax, literacy tests were really designed to keep African Americans from voting."

Also, S[students'] E [edition] page 333, paragraph 3, delete the first sentence and replace it with the following: "Both poll taxes and literacy tests could keep poor whites from voting as well. In some states, southern Democrats wanted to keep these voters from supporting Populist candidates. Other states sought to protect white voting rights by passing special laws with **grandfather clauses.**"

To fit these changes, delete the following:

S [students'] E [edition] page 333, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, third sentence, delete "and thus were required to take the literacy tests."

S [students'] E [edition] page 333, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, delete "and baggy clothes grinned broadly as he" from the 6<sup>th</sup> sentence.

Also, add the following Background note to TE page 334, shifting the current Background note to page 335:

"Background -White Primaries

As another way to block African Americans from political power, some southern states passed laws that excluded blacks from voting in Democratic primaries. The Democratic Party dominated most southern states from Reconstruction through the mid-twentieth century. Barring African Americans from Democratic primaries effectively kept them from exercising their right

to vote in a meaningful way. The so-called white primary was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court decision *Smith v. Allwright* in 1944.”

**APPENDIX 2. TABLES-SUMMARY PUBLISHER RESPONSE**

<p><b>Texas Public Policy Foundation - Social Studies Textbook Review</b></p> <p><b>Publisher Responses to Textbook Error Report (August 2002)</b></p>
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**Course/Grade: Grade 6 - World Cultures**

<u>Publisher:</u>	Errors Identified:			% Requested Changes Made	Textbook Improvement Rating (#1 is Best)
	Total Reported	# Changes Made	# Refuted		
<b>Glencoe/McGraw Hill</b>	10	7 (2)	3	70%	4
<b>Harcourt</b>	20	17 (12)	3	85%	3
<b>Holt Rinehart &amp; Winston</b>	7	4	3	57%	5
<b>McDougal Littell</b>	9	8	1	89%	2
<b>Prentice Hall</b>	14	14	0	100%	1

**Note:** # in ( ) is the total number of Errors that the publisher had already identified & submitted as corrections to the Texas Education Agency prior to the Foundation's Report



**Texas Public Policy Foundation - Social Studies Textbook  
Review  
Publisher Responses to Textbook Error Report (August 2002)**

**Course/Grade: Grade 7 - Texas History**

<u>Publisher:</u>	Errors Identified:			% Requested Changes Made	Textbook Improvement Rating (#1 is Best)
	Total Reported	# Changes Made	# Refuted		
Glencoe/McGraw Hill	5	4 (2)	1	80%	2
Holt Rinehart & Winston	6	3	3	50%	4
McDougal Littell	11	7	4	64%	3
Prentice Hall	20 (1)	20	0	100%	1

**Note:** # in ( ) is the total number of Errors that the publisher had already identified & submitted as corrections to the Texas Education Agency prior to the Foundation's Report

**Texas Public Policy Foundation - Social Studies Textbook  
Review  
Publisher Responses to Textbook Error Report (August 2002)**

**Course/Grade: Grade 8 - American History (before Reconstruction)**

<b><u>Publisher:</u></b>	<b>Errors Identified:</b>			<b>% Requested Changes Made</b>	<b>Textbook Improvement Rating (#1 is Best)</b>
	<b>Total Reported</b>	<b># Changes Made</b>	<b># Refuted</b>		
<b>Glencoe/McGraw Hill</b>	40	26 (4)	14	65%	2 tie
<b>Holt Rinehart &amp; Winston</b>	18	13 (1)	5	72%	1
<b>McDougal Littell</b>	17	6 (2)	11	35%	3
<b>Prentice Hall</b>	20	13 (1)	7	65%	2 tie

**Note:** # in ( ) is the total number of Errors that the publisher had already identified & submitted as corrections to the Texas Education Agency prior to the Foundation's Report

**Texas Public Policy Foundation - Social Studies Textbook Review  
 Publisher Responses to Textbook Error Report (August 2002)**

**Course/Grade: High School American History (after Reconstruction)**

<b><u>Publisher:</u></b>	<b>Errors Identified:</b>			<b>% Requested Changes Made</b>	<b>Textbook Improvement Rating (#1 is Best)</b>
	<b>Total Reported</b>	<b># Changes Made</b>	<b># Refuted</b>		
<b>Glencoe/McGraw Hill *</b>	0	0	0	-	
<b>Holt Rinehart &amp; Winston*</b>	0	0	0	-	
<b>McDougal Littell</b>	121	49 (1)	74	40%	2
<b>Prentice Hall</b>	95	91 (1)	4	95%	1

**Note:** # in ( ) is the total number of Errors that the publisher had already identified & submitted as corrections to the Texas Education Agency prior to the Foundation's Report

\* Evaluations by second reviewer have not yet been received.

**Texas Public Policy Foundation - Social Studies Textbook  
Review  
Publisher Responses to Textbook Error Report (August 2002)**

**Course/Grade: High School World History**

<u>Publisher:</u>	Errors Identified:			% Requested Changes Made	Textbook Improvement Rating (#1 is Best)
	Total Reported	# Changes Made	# Refuted		
<b>Glencoe/McGraw Hill</b>	13	4	9	30%	4
<b>Holt Rinehart &amp; Winston</b>	7	5	2	71%	1
<b>McDougal Littell</b>	12	4	8	33%	3
<b>Prentice Hall</b>	11	4	7	36%	2

**Note:** # in ( ) is the total number of Errors that the publisher had already identified & submitted as corrections to the Texas Education Agency prior to the Foundation's Report

**Texas Public Policy Foundation - Social Studies Textbook  
Review  
Publisher Responses to Textbook Error Report (August 2002)**

**Course/Grade: High School American Government**

<b><u>Publisher:</u></b>	<b>Errors Identified:</b>			<b>% Requested Changes Made</b>	<b>Textbook Improvement Rating (#1 is Best)</b>
	<b>Total Reported</b>	<b># Changes Made</b>	<b># Refuted</b>		
<b>Glencoe/McGraw Hill</b>	17	9	8	53%	2
<b>Holt Rinehart &amp; Winston</b>	18	9 (1)	9	50%	3
<b>Prentice Hall</b>	27	26	1	96%	1

**Note:** # in ( ) is the total number of Errors that the publisher had already identified & submitted as corrections to the Texas Education Agency prior to the Foundation's Report

**Texas Public Policy Foundation - Social Studies Textbook  
Review  
Publisher Responses to Textbook Error Report (August 2002)**

**Course/Grade: High School Economics**

<u>Publisher:</u>	Errors Identified:			% Requested Changes Made	Textbook Improvement Rating (#1 is Best)
	Total Reported	# Changes Made	# Refuted		
Glencoe/McGraw Hill "Today & Tomorrow"	3	0	3	0%	
Glencoe/McGraw Hill "Principles & Practice"	4	2	2	50%	2
Holt Rinehart & Winston	8	6 (1)	2	75%	1
Prentice Hall	0	0	0		

**Note:** # in ( ) is the total number of Errors that the publisher had already identified & submitted as corrections to the Texas Education Agency prior to the Foundation's Report