

## America: Home of Patriotic Self-Censorship

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Copy Editor

As part of a first world country, citizens of the U.S. have much to be proud of. However, the Jefferson County school board's recent motion to change their U.S. History curriculum to be more "patriotic" has sparked widespread debate about the representation of the US in education. One concept should be kept in mind: history must be the accurate representation of the past in order to qualify as history.

In this school year, the College Board implemented its new Advanced Placement (AP) US History curriculum changes, in which specific concepts that College Board have listed need to be taught, but other major figures and events will still need to be addressed as well. One difference from the previous curriculum was the implementation of a new focus on historical thinking skills

and thematic learning objectives, compared to the past general list of themes. According to the Hechinger Report, the changes coincide with Common Core standards.

However, some were not too keen in taking in change.

In response to the new curriculum, the Jefferson County school board planned to create a curriculum committee that would change school material to be more "patriotic." Material that would possibly encourage disobeying the law, such as certain rebellions and nonviolent protests, would

be avoided. However, teachers and students saw this as nothing more than censorship, with good reason. Students from at least five Jefferson County high schools



walked out of class on Sept. 23; previously, some of the high schools closed on Sept. 19 after a large number of teachers called in sick in protest, according to the DenverPost.

The student and teacher protests have garnered much needed attention, even from the College Board itself. The College Board has acknowledged and has stated its support for the

students' actions in Colorado.

"If a school or district censors essential concepts from an Advanced Placement course, that course can no longer bear the 'AP' designation," the College Board said in their Statement in Support of Students on Sept. 26. According to the Denver Post, on Oct. 2, the school board also agreed to reorganize the school curriculum, but with more student, teacher and community input as well.

In perspective, nothing is entirely good or bad; it does not make sense to sugarcoat our past when we already know of its imperfections. By choosing to omit specific parts of our history, students will learn only fragments of the whole picture. They will have biased and uninformed perspectives about our past that would significantly differ if they were given history in its unadulterated state. If we do not learn of our shortcomings, how can we fix them?



NO  
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BACK

### The Worth of a Letter

ELTON HO  
Copy Editor

The constant pressures of school often drain students of motivation. Flooded with plenty of work but little incentive to complete it, students may wonder: what is the purpose of all that effort? One problem lies in what students are led to believe education is for.

It all comes back to that dream that has been imposed on us since the beginning: college. We are told that our education in high school is all about getting colleges to accept us. Once we get in, our college degree will allow us to plop ourselves into a career, and then we'll somehow be happy and successful. Unfortunately, this common view pushes true learning to the curb, preventing students from realizing the intrinsic value of education itself.

Ultimately, it's important not to forget the real reason we go to school. We don't study history so we can rattle off dates, nor do we read novels to impress our bosses by knowing the "themes." To me, education does actually have a purpose and it's not just to get into college and find a job. We educate ourselves so that we can discover our passions, ignite the fires inside us and strive to be people who will improve society. We study to broaden our world, to make sense of the enormous assortment of people, viewpoints and ideas that compose it. In comparison to the learning, the letter grades are largely insignificant.

School should not just feel like a struggle to earn grades or to satisfy colleges. Before anything else, students should consider the reasons why they study, or else it will all seem meaningless.

## Staff Ed: Is the Parental 'Technology Leash' Healthy for a Parent-Child Relationship?

In this day and age, it is very uncommon to find a teenager without a cellphone. In fact, according to a 2013 Pew Research study, 78 percent of America's teenage population owns a cellular device. However, this poses a crucial question: how can parents protect their children from the dangers of the technological world? New apps such as Ignore No More locks a child's phone if a parent's call is missed and only reactivates if the parent is called back. To a larger extreme, the Catch Me If You Can and Protect Me If You Can apps enable a parent to see every text, phone call, picture, video and contact on their child's phone. The parent can have a record of the child's every location and be alerted if their phone travels outside certain boundaries. On such a widespread scale, parents can virtually monitor, track and oversee their child's every action without them ever knowing. There is no doubt a growing market of parents wanting to digitally keep track of their children's moves and whereabouts, and though it is understandable for

a parent to protect one's child, there is a fine line between protecting and invading.

The technology leash parents enforce is meant to protect children and keep them safe, as well as monitor their whereabouts, friends



and activities. While some teens may not necessarily mind if their parents were to utilize the many apps at their disposal, it is the concept behind being monitored that brings about an ethical issue. A cell phone nowadays can contain many snippets of private information, information that gets violated when these apps monitor every move one makes on the phone.

Of course, one may argue that parents should be privy to such information, especially when it concerns the safety of their child. However, relying on these apps alone creates a lack of trust and communication, which is detrimental to the parent-child relationship. Parents may be seen as "snooping" or going behind their child's back. The child will most likely react with resentment and for parent-child relationships that already lack trust, the apps prevent any possible improvement.

Ultimately, a healthy parent-child relationship revolves around a mutual sense of trust. A parent breaches this trust if they uphold a strict and unfair leash on their child. Similarly, a child can also violate a parent's faith if they repeatedly commit irresponsible and ignorant actions. Open communication is essentially the best way to address parental worries and resolve family conflicts. Strictly monitoring what a child does on their phone, regardless of the reason, will primarily decrease the chances for a trusting relationship.

MOOR graphic by SAMMIE CHEN



## Bagging California's Plastic Bags

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Staff Writer

California was the birthplace of the Frisbee®, McDonald's and Barbie® dolls. Now, California has added another first to this list of accomplishments, as the first state to ban plastic bags. The bill to ban single-use plastic bags was approved this past September. The ban will start for companies like Target and Walmart in July 2015 and then be implemented in smaller businesses in 2016. The policy is essentially very beneficial to our environment and could influence other states to take similar measures.

Every year, over ten billion plastic bags are used in California alone, according to Huffington Post. Single-use bags create litter and only three percent of plastic bags are recycled in California. No more plastic bags means that citizens will have to adapt to using reusable bags. Though some are reluctant to always remember to

carry a reusable bag, it is an important step toward an eco-friendly state.

About one-third of California's population is already living under city ordinances that have banned plastic bags. For example, San Francisco has had a plastic bag ban since 2007. These cities show that Californians can embrace the lack of single-use plastic bags.

Though banning plastic bags will impose a handful of changes such as customers having to remember to bring reusable bags when they shop, we should not face these changes hesitantly. This bill may prove to be one of the most significant pieces of California legislation. Since the ban will be in effect starting July 2015, California lawmakers have nine months to promote the pros of banning plastic bags. Until then, it is our job as Californians to accept and adapt to the idea of no more plastic bags to truly benefit our ecosystem.

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