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## ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

### ***ARKANSAS STATE CONFERENCE STATEMENT ON ARKANSAS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DECISION TO "DO AWAY WITH" AP AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES***

***"It's time to confront the historic and persistent inequalities that impact our community and educational journey of black children."***

**Little Rock, Arkansas-** The Arkansas State Conference of the NAACP is appalled at the recent decision of Arkansas Department of Education to make a hasty decision at the final hour to "do away with" AP African American Studies. Less than 48 hours before the first day of school, districts have to scramble to come up with a plan. This is a distraction to school districts, administrations, teachers and foremost our students who need the credit to graduate next year and the coming years.

The Advanced Placement course is in pilot phase, being taught in 60 U.S. districts this school year. Only two schools in Arkansas — Little Rock Central High and The Academies at Jonesboro High — offer the class. The class teaches history. Students at Little Rock Central High School, where the AP African American History course is being piloted, have a right to learn about their history. Over 66 years ago in 1957, the "Little Rock Nine" made history by integrating Central High School.

This decision is reprehensible and an attack on our civil rights as well as the advancement of students of color in Arkansas. Dismissal of an AP African American Studies course is not only a dereliction of duty to ensure equitable education for all Arkansans, but shows clear disdain for the lives and experiences that form part of our history. Dismissing this important subject defies centuries of evidence to the contrary. African American history is American history, and failure to comprehend this very simple fact is un-American in and of itself.

***"African Americans have been an important part of history for hundreds of years." said State President Tommy Daniels. "Black inventors paved the way with ideas and inventions that are being used today. To deliberately cause an inequity in education for black students in Arkansas is unacceptable and the NAACP will take a stand to keep African American history part of the curriculum."***

***"It's time to confront the historic and persistent inequalities that impact our community and educational journey of black children." said Barry Jefferson-State Conference Political Action Chair. "African American studies allows students to learn about the experiences and contributions of African Americans throughout history and in our very own state. It enables them to appreciate and value diversity which is a critical element in today's society."***

The Arkansas State Conference of the NAACP calls upon the State Department of Education to withdraw this decision. Black students and all students should not have to worry about their credits to graduate, but focus on learning to become adults and productive members of society.

The time is now that we stand together and take action for the sake of students of color in Arkansas. The future of "Our" history depends on it.

*Learn More about NAACP's mission at: [www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org)*