



California Council for the Social Studies
AN AFFILIATE OF NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

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To the Editor:

Judith Pace is correct in addressing the important question, “Why We Need to Save (and Strengthen) Social Studies” (December 19, 2007). There is an abundance of quantitative data and anecdotal evidence that History-Social Science education is indeed, being pushed out of the curriculum in most schools across the nation but no where is the problem most acute than in elementary schools and schools in Program Improvement or Corrective Action status. So who is missing out on the opportunity to learn history, to understand what it means to live in a democracy, to embody the knowledge and skills to be responsible, engaged citizens? Children who are young, children who are poor, and often, children who are immigrants, African-American or Latino.

But the larger question looms – why isn’t this being addressed? The California Council for the Social Studies (CCSS), a state affiliate of the National Council for the Social Studies and largest professional organization of History-Social Science teachers in the California has been forthright in creating position statements to address this crisis (www.ccss.org). CCSS along with a number of organizations in California have sent numerous letters to Congressman George Miller and other legislators, spoke before the Aspen Institute’s Commission on NCLB, submitted countless letters to Education Week, ASCD’s Educational Leadership, introduced legislation at the state level, and been actively involved in the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. And, Dr. Pace is correct again by stating, “hardly a note has been heard in the media about the ‘squeezing’ of social studies, a significant consequence of the pressure to raise test scores in reading and mathematics.”

Thank you, Dr. Pace for raising this important issue and thank you Ed Week for printing her Commentary. Surely in this election year, we can spend some energy focusing on the future of American democracy to ensure that *every* American will have the opportunity to learn and practice their rights and responsibilities as members of a democratic society.

Sincerely,

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Immediate Past President
California Council for the Social Studies