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ALFRED B. FANTINI
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JOSÉ LUIS ROJAS
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March 21, 2023

ORDERED:

WHEREAS: Florida Governor Ron DeSantis publicly signed the Stop Woke Bill and banned the teaching of AP African American History in Florida; deeming it as “lacking educational value”, preventing and discouraging students from taking this course and other ethnic and racial studies classes that go beyond current standard history curriculums around the country; and

WHEREAS: The newly introduced College Board’s AP African American Studies class at CRLS is a pilot course that explores Black history to a new extent, exposing students to a comprehensive curriculum at a college level that is centralized around the concept of Harvard’s Henry Louis Gates Jr.’s idea of the “42 million ways to be Black”; and

WHEREAS: This class follows the trajectory of Black history via four units: Unit One - Origins of the African Diaspora, Unit Two - Freedom, Enslavement, and Resistance, Unit Three - The Practice of Freedom, and Unit Four - Movements and Debates; and

WHEREAS: AP African American studies equips students with the foundational tools to apply their understanding of the historical evolution of Black societies around the world in addition to the more general skill of historical analysis which can be utilized on an everyday basis beyond this course; and

WHEREAS: By the end of their time in this class, scholars have a more holistic understanding of various sub-themes that together create the curriculum of AP African American Studies; and

WHEREAS: Students learn about the concept of intersectionality through examining the implications of race, gender, and class on the experiences of Black Americans and those in the broader African diaspora; and

WHEREAS: Scholars gain the critical skill of understanding the diversity within and across Black societies both before and after the emergence of trans-Atlantic slavery; and

WHEREAS: Members of the class conceptualize the various ways that Black communities have advocated for autonomy and authentic representation, the advancement of opportunities, and justice as a means to combat global systemic inequality; and

WHEREAS: CRLS is one of 60 select high schools across the nation that were given the opportunity to implement the pilot course of AP African American Studies, this district has demonstrated its continued commitment to equity in education, both in Cambridge and beyond; and

WHEREAS: More than 200 colleges and universities have already committed to recognizing the AP African American Studies for college credit, and

WHEREAS: We must acknowledge that this revolutionary stride towards a better future for our schools has only been possible through the persistence and empowerment of marginalized students and educators whose histories are a vital part of our curriculum and should be treated as such; and

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WHEREAS: Due to the national threat towards the learning of our youth and the preservation of the historical narratives of Black and other marginalized peoples, it is our duty to act in solidarity and actively support and protect this course; and

WHEREAS: AP African American Studies is a course with a culturally responsive curriculum that represents a foundational part of Americans' authentic shared history. By uplifting underrepresented trailblazers such as Michelle Browder and Kathleen Cleaver and frequently unrecognized events such as Gabriel's Rebellion, the St. Augustine Movement, and the Watts Truce, this course shifts from a eurocentric focus to an alternative yet equally important point of view that every student deserves to have access to learning from; and

WHEREAS: 54 students have taken AP African American Studies between this past Fall and the current Spring semesters, including 38 Black Students; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee reaffirms its commitment to including AP African American Studies and other ethnic studies in the Cambridge Public Schools and publicly declares intent to protect the teaching of this course and material despite any forthcoming backlash.

A true copy:

Ariel B. Kennebrew
Attest:
Ariel B. Kennebrew
Executive Secretary to the Cambridge School Committee

Motion #23-060

cc:
Member Hunter
Mayor Siddiqui
Member Wilson
Student Member Clemente
Student Member Escamilla-Salomon
Superintendent