

– HB 4294 –
PROFILE OF FOLLY

HB 4294's authors lack deep understanding of Texas textbook adoptions.
They have not thought through the implications of their proposal.
It is inept, unwise, and unfit for passage.

In 1998, Texas citizens found 379 2 + 2 = 5-type factual errors that TEA and publishers missed in 5 high school World History books up for Texas approval.

In 2002, Texas citizens found 249 2 + 2 = 5-type factual errors that TEA and publishers missed in 4 high school U.S. History books up for Texas approval.

In 2003, Texas citizens found 116 2 + 2 = 5-type factual errors that TEA and publishers missed in 3 high school Biology books up for Texas approval.

Why did publishers correct almost all these 744 total factual errors in their final Texas editions actually sold here? Because *at present, state funds can purchase only error-free textbooks.*

HB 4294 changes this. IT SPENDS STATE FUNDS FOR TEXTBOOKS ***NOT SCREENED FOR FACTUAL ERRORS.*** It accommodates factual errors. It invites and rewards bad editing.

HB 4294 says publishers can either undergo the SBOE approval process, fix factual errors it identifies, and be fined for identified errors not fixed; or undergo an alternative TEA approval process, ignore factual errors, and still get state funding. Which do you think they will do?

HB 4294 would multiply those 744 factual errors. Publishers sell textbooks by their teaching aids, not subject matter content. Why prevent errors no one will catch? The Association of American Publishers speaks for the textbook industry. On factual errors, it says, "Technical perfection, even if attainable, is not a sound goal in textbooks." We have documentation.

Stoking that neglect, HB 4294 deliberately, explicitly exempts textbooks purchased under its provisions from concern over factual errors. Its proposed Section 31.0231(a) begins, "Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter" That superseded chapter includes Section 31.023, whose subsection (b) says textbooks must be "free from factual errors."

And HB 4294's proposed Section 31.0231(g) lets publishers "update" textbooks on TEA's list *without TEA permission.* This could mean **LESS TEKS COVERAGE** and **MORE FACTUAL ERRORS.**

Q: Why not revise HB 4294 to mend its flawed alternative TEA approval process?

A: The more you mend its flaws the more you duplicate the SBOE process at additional cost.

Q: HB 4294 would spend state funds on technology and erroneous textbooks.

Should we reject its textbook funding and pass its technology funding?

A: No. Exotic technological equipment could *effectively bar citizens from easy at-home inspection of textbooks, A DE FACTO DENIAL OF THEIR RIGHT TO PETITION.*

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