

**Attn:**

**National Council of Teachers of English  
Headquarters**

1111 W. Kenyon Road  
Urbana, IL 61801-1096  
Phone: 217-328-3870 or 877-369-6283  
Fax: 217-328-9645

Re: Joint Statement on the NAACP Missouri Travel Advisory and SB 43 by the NCTE/CCCC  
Black, Latinx, American Indian, and Asian/Asian American Caucuses

NCTE Executive Committee,  
CCCC Executive Committee,  
NCTE/CCCC Community of Scholars and Teachers,

As a collective, the Black, Latinx, American Indian, and Asian/Asian American Caucuses share this statement to express deep concern about the passage of SB 43 in Missouri, the set location for the NCTE conference in November 2017 and CCCC in March 2018, and the resulting travel advisory issued by the NAACP. We are particularly concerned with specific parts of the bill that make discrimination particularly hard to prove by placing the burden of proof on the plaintiff to claim that race discrimination serves as a “motivating” vs. “contributing” factor. This law is quite troublesome being that it has been instituted in Missouri, a racially hostile state, as noted by the [Missouri NAACP](#). Such a law is likely to affect the sense of well-being, respect, and equal protection and representation under the law of, not only Missouri residents, but also both NCTE and CCCC conferences attendees.

We have examined the text of SB 43 and the comments from the Google survey that Asao Inoue distributed recently. **Given the concern expressed by many conference participants, regarding their safety and the moral ethical stance of NCTE as a professional organization, jointly, the Black, Latinx, American Indian, and Asian/Asian American Caucuses strongly suggest moving the locations of the 2017 NCTE and the 2018 CCCC conventions from St. Louis, MO and Kansas City, MO, respectively, to locations that are more inclusive of and safe for all of the NCTE/CCCC membership.** In the event that the conference cannot be moved, we expect that the CCCC provide live-streaming of events, as well as access to internet and AV for presenters choosing not to physically attend out of concern for safety and/or for solidarity with other presenters. We also hope the organization as a whole intervenes to take action against SB 43, through coordinated efforts with local organizations while in Missouri.

As members of NCTE/CCCC, we felt compelled to compose this document because we have faithfully participated in its activities with the belief that our effort could help NCTE actualize its vision. The mission states, “NCTE and its members will apply the power of language and literacy to actively pursue justice and equity for all students and the educators who serve them.” This progressive stance towards inclusion has amassed numerous official statements affirming its commitment to equity. We wish to leverage that literature in our plea for NCTE. We humbly request for you to refuse to host any NCTE activity in geographies whose laws audaciously dismiss and deny equal rights.

There are many position statements that reflect NCTE’s mission, one of the most recent being the [NCTE Position Statement in Support of Ethnic Studies Initiatives for K-12](#). This progressive stance towards inclusion mirrors numerous official statements affirming NCTE’s commitment to equity. We feel that such measures are directly threatened in states that have documented histories of racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and anti-immigrant attitudes such as Missouri. We understand that the reality of Missouri’s politics presents people with some hard choices. Therefore, be it resolved that we are requesting that the following actions be taken:

We advocate for increased transparency regarding the decision-making process in the selection of conference locations. How much does NCTE consider the atmosphere and the way it affects conference participants’ safety, and the safety of marginalized communities? In addition, we advocate for NCTE/CCCC policy that designates a sense of accountability to these diversity statements in decisions that have real effects on people’s bodies. Not every state is the same for everyone, and it should not be the responsibility of targeted groups to face opposition and be put in the position to defend these concerns to members who are not the subjects of these threats and danger.

As members of the NCTE/CCCC Black, Latinx, American Indian, and Asian/Asian American Caucuses, we are highly concerned with any policy that counters the purpose of the initial Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity Acts put in place to help more vulnerable populations such as African Americans, Latinxs, American Indian and Indigenous peoples, Middle Easterners, Asians, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and other racial minorities achieve a level of equal treatment not granted previously. This position is demonstrated through efforts of the Black, Latinx, American Indian, and Asian/Asian American Caucuses to continue pursuing activities that support Black, Latinx, American Indian, Indigenous, and Asian/Asian American students’ achievement in English Studies and Education at all levels from Kindergarten to the PhD. Such activities actualize NCTE’s vision (Cultivating New Voices and initiatives, annual workshops and cultural celebrations hosted by the Black, Latinx, and American Indian Caucuses at both NCTE and CCCC). Furthermore, our position is directly correlated to NCTE’s mission statement: “NCTE and its members will apply the power of language and literacy to actively pursue justice and equity for all students and the educators who serve them.”

Historically, NCTE has been interested in the ability of language to intervene on behalf of disenfranchised populations, regardless of their education level. This bill may be said to be beneficial in clarifying discriminatory laws for employers; however, this bill also exempts many people, groups, organizations, and governmental agencies from being subjected to discriminatory claims. More specifically, lines 42-60 of the [SB 43](#) are of particular note. The fact that the bill exempts certain officials from being subject to discriminatory laws, make segregation in some instances legal, leading the Missouri NAACP to call this a “Jim Crow Bill.” We feel that this is an outright affront to people of color and LGBT populations who are disproportionately the victims of discrimination in the workplace and other public and private organizations. This law is a racist law, and it is very much a part of the state’s historical political stance toward the well-being of its citizens of color and their right to due process and equal protection under the law, guaranteed by all citizens by the U.S. constitution and the 14th amendment. We see this law as a direct compromise to the Civil Rights laws meant to ensure the equal treatment of all individuals regardless of race or sexual orientation. We have closely read SB 43, and believe that this law’s verbiage is a type of languaging that both organizations, NCTE and CCCC, should be actively working to disrupt. We, thus, want to represent an approach to languaging that may disrupt and gain the attention of the local populace whenever the conference is held in a place that threatens the mission of NCTE and CCCC.

The passage of Missouri’s SB 43 is but a cog in the larger brutal and subtle machinations of a racially hostile society that subordinates lives of people of color. There is no safe space on colonized, settled land, and this law exacerbates existing tensions. We further feel that this act aligns with President Donald Trump’s problematic agenda which has escalated acts of systemic racism. NCTE has many statements that affirm anti-racist and discriminatory practices. To this end, we are looking for actions beyond statements that demonstrate the organization’s commitment to **SHOWING UP FOR RACIAL JUSTICE** by seriously considering these options for action:

**Options for Action:**

Select conference sites that are located in cities where political leaders (e.g. legislators) have rejected any discrimination and have pledged to continue to do so.

Provide individual members with more ways to access data regarding how conference sites are selected--including vendors, contract information, and budgetary limitations and possibilities.

Expand opportunities for representatives from the Caucuses and/or SIGs to directly participate in executive decisions about annual conference planning and execution.

Offer more lobbying transparency, so that members can see NCTE’s commitment to democratic principles.

Provide an account of NCTE's relationship to NAACP and anti-hate organizations.

Explain the role of NCTE's Political Action Committee. If there is not one, create one.

Write a letter to the Missouri legislature/governor.

Take safety precautions and share them widely with members.

Consider more remote options.

Organize a die-in or protest at the Missouri State House.

Wear black and brown armbands at the conference to show solidarity with people of color.

Consult local grassroots organizations and elders to get their input on developing resources for the members attending each conference, including HBCUs, American Indian cultural centers or studies programs, tribal colleges, and more.

Create opportunities for members or the organization to donate money to the NAACP and/or local anti-hate organizations.

Create and distribute a list of anti-hate and minority owned/friendly businesses at the conference site where members can dine, stay, or socialize.

Offer members a list of safe/protected spaces including friendship centers, LGBTQ zones, etc.

Invite anti-hate organizers and/or the NAACP to run a workshop or series of workshops on how to organize (and find funding to pay them appropriately for their labor).

Signed and Written by:

Iris Ruiz, Co-Chair Latinx Caucus

Cruz Medina, Co-Chair Latinx Caucus

Tracey Flores, Co-Chair Latinx Caucus

Marilisa Jimenez, Co-Chair Latinx Caucus

Christina Cedillo, Vice Co-Chair Latinx Caucus

Karriann Soto, Secretary Latinx Caucus

David Kirkland, Co-Chair Black Caucus

Elaine Richardson, Co-Chair Black Caucus

Alexandria Lockett, Member of the Black Caucus  
Lisa King, Co-Chair American Indian Caucus  
Andrea Riley Mukavetz, Co-Chair American Indian Caucus  
Resa Crane Bizzaro, Co-Chair American Indian Caucus  
Jennifer Sano-Franchini, Co-Chair Asian/Asian American Caucus  
Iswari Pandey, Co-Chair Asian/Asian American Caucus

### **Co-Signers**

CCCC Standing Group: Council on Basic Writing  
Cristina Kirklighter, Past Co-Chair Latinx Caucus  
Isabel Baca, NCTE/CCCC Member Latinx Caucus/NCTE College Section Steering  
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Les Hutchison, Web Designer Latinx Caucus  
Genevieve Garcia de Mueller, Co-Chair CWPA POC Caucus  
Romeo Garcia, Latinx Caucus Historian  
Raul Sanchez, Past Co-Chair Latinx Caucus  
Victor Villanueva, Past Co-Chair, Latinx Caucus, Former Chair, CCCC  
Ana Milena Ribero, Treasurer Latinx Caucus  
James Sanchez, NCTE/CCCC Member  
Lynn C. Lewis, NCTE/CCCC Member, Associate Professor, Oklahoma State University.  
Timothy Oleksiak, Member Queer Caucus  
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Composition  
Jenn Fishman, Immediate Past President of the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of  
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Lisa Mastrangelo, President, Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and  
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Ruth Osorio, Disability Studies Standing Group  
Jacqueline Rhodes, Co-Chair CCCC Queer Caucus  
GPat Patterson, Co-Chair CCCC Queer Caucus  
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CCCC Feminist Caucus Co-Chairs, Kate Pantiledes and Holly Hassel  
Sandra L. Osorio, Past Co-Chair Latinx Caucus  
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Chelsea Lonsdale, Member CBW and Queer Caucus

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Eric Manuel Rodriguez, Social Media Chair, Latinx Caucus  
Keith Dorwick, Queer Caucus Member  
Garrett W. Nichols, Member and Past Co-Chair Queer Caucus  
Kirsti Cole, Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition  
Timothy R. Dougherty, West Chester University of PA, member Labor Caucus  
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CCCC Transnational Composition Standing Group

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Member/CWPA Member/Association of Borderlands Studies Member  
Ashanka Kumari, University of Louisville, NCTE/CCCC member, Asian/Asian American Caucus  
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Lucia Pawlowski, University of St. Thomas, NCTE/CCCC member  
Virginia Schwarz, University of Wisconsin Madison, NCTE/CCCC/ TYCA member  
Jennifer Nish, American University of Beirut, NCTE/CCCC/CFSHRC member  
Ian Barnard, Chapman University, NCTE/CCCC member  
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Jennifer Rae Slinkard, University of Arizona, NCTE/CCCC member

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Tom Pace, John Carroll University, NCTE/CCCC member.  
Lucia Dura, The University of Texas at El Paso, NCTE/CCCC member  
Meghan A. Sweeney, Saint Mary's College of California, NCTE/CCCC member  
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Caucus member  
Rachel Lewis, Northeastern University/Queer Caucus  
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Martha McKay Canter, NCTE/CCCC Member, Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of  
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Kenny Smith, University of California, Santa Barbara, NCTE/CCCC member.  
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Julie Alexander, Miami University, NCTE/CCCC member  
Brian Hendrickson, Roger Williams University, NCTE/CCCC member  
William Klein, University of Missouri-St. Louis, NCTE/CCCC member  
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Mat Sillito, Latinx Caucus member  
Kate Navickas, Cornell University, Coalition of Feminist Scholars member, NCTE/CCCC member  
Rachael Shapiro, Rowan University, NCTE/CCCC member  
Harry Denny, Purdue University, NCTE/CCCC member, IWCA LGBTQIA SIG  
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Laurie A. Pinkert, University of Central Florida, NCTE College Section Steering Committee/CCCC member

Nancy Bou Ayash, University of Washington, Seattle, NCTE/CCCC member

Derek Mueller, Eastern Michigan University, NCTE/CCCC member

Shereen Inayatulla, York College, CUNY, NCTE/CCCC member

Jodie Nicotra, University of Idaho, NCTE/CCCC member

Kenlea Pebbles, Michigan State University, American Indian Caucus Member, NCTE/CCCC member

Alison Cardinal, University of Washington, NCTE/CCCC member

Anthony Warnke, Green River College, NCTE/CCCC member

Bonnie Tucker, University of Michigan, NCTE/CCCC member

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Eunjeong Lee, NCTE/CCCC member

Amy Hodges, Texas A&M University at Qatar, NCTE/CCCC member

Aneil Rallin, Soka University of America, former NCTE/CCCC member and Queer Caucus member

Steven Alvarez, NCTE/CCCC member, Latinx Caucus member

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Note\*\*\* If anyone wants me to add their name/group to the document, please email me at ruizirisd@gmail.com.

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