



Paul Noursi – Co-chair
Nancy Wein – Co-chair

Participating Organizations

American Muslims for Palestine

Appalachian Peace Education Center

Arab American Association of Central Virginia

Community for Justice in Palestine & Israel of the Alliance of Baptists

Defenders for Freedom, Justice, and Equality

Israel Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church - USA

Jewish Voice for Peace

National Arab American Women's Association

New Dominion PAC

Northern Virginians for Peace & Justice

Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace

Plowshares Peace & Justice Center

Richmonders for Peace in Israel and Palestine

Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East, Northern Virginia Chapter

United Methodists for Kairos Response

US Campaign for Palestinian Rights

Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace

January 25, 2019

Luess Sampson-Lizotte
Vice President, Product Development, Humanities and Science Learning Services
Pearson

Dear Ms. Sampson-Lizotte,

We are the Co-chairs of the Education Committee of the Virginia Coalition for Human Rights, and we thank you for your assistance last year in explaining Pearson's internal process for vetting suggested revisions from outside groups.

We write to share with you our concerns about your textbook **World History and Geography: 1500 to the Present**.

In general, we have found the content related to Arabs, the Middle East, and Israel-Palestine to be misleading and biased, with generalizations and oversimplifications that lead to considerable inaccuracy. We have found some of the language to be polarized and sanitized. A representation of the variety of perspectives on various issues is lacking. The text describing gender roles for women is antiquated. The misspelling of Bashar al-Assad's name as "Bashir al-Assad" throughout the text was disconcerting to our scholars. Not only do the names Bashir and Bashar have totally different meanings in Arabic, but the failure to correctly spell a well-known Middle Eastern leader's name belies a lack of knowledge about the region and a lack of rigor in vetting and editing the text.

We have attached a review by Virginia-based academicians—many of whom are Middle East experts—that describes our concerns found in Topic 9/ Lesson 2, Topic 12/Lessons 3-4, and Topic 13/Lesson 8. Our reviewers have found several problematic statements. For each, we have noted the passage and have provided a possible rewording of that passage along with the rationales for each and supporting citations.

In addition to our review, we have attached a summary of the rating sheet for this text completed by a Virginia Department of Education textbook review committee in December of 2017. We focus on Section I: WHII.1, WHII.13, WHII.14, WHII.15, and on Section II: #5 and #7. We also note that the VDOE review committee rated WHII.6 and WHII.7 as "Limited," an assessment that warrants Pearson's attention.

We thank you in advance for your response to this letter. We sincerely hope that you will carefully consider our concerns. We believe it is important for textbook companies to consult a wide variety of expert views when writing a textbook to be used by young people. It is important that Virginia's teachers and students have balanced, accurate materials in their classrooms.

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Co-chair, Education Committee

Jeanne Trabulsi
Co-chair, Education Committee

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