



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 National Capital Presbytery  
Jewish Voice for Peace  
New Dominion PAC  
Northern Virginians for Peace & Justice  
Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace  
Plowshare 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

May 31, 2018

**Subject: Questionable Edits to Virginia K-12 Textbooks**

Dear Publisher,

On March 22, 2018, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) approved a proposed list of K-12 History and Social Studies textbooks. Your company's textbooks and teaching guides are among those selected for use in Virginia.

Previous to that date, the VDOE solicited public review and feedback of proposed textbooks. As stated by VDOE:

"The textbook review process places primary responsibility on publishers to ensure the accuracy of their textbooks. Publishers must certify that textbooks submitted for approval have been thoroughly examined and reviewed by qualified content experts for factual accuracy."

On February 28, 2018, just before the state textbook review period ended, the Jewish Community Federation endorsed and submitted a lengthy and detailed set of changes to the VDOE based on a review conducted by the California-based Institute for Curriculum Services (ICS). ICS also sent its proposed changes directly to publishers in hopes that they would "correct" and "improve" their textbooks "before state adoption."

The full set of ICS's proposed changes were obtained and publicly released under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. (Please see the enclosed PR Newswire release.) Unfortunately, it is our view that many of the changes proposed by ICS, if adopted, would degrade, rather than improve, the accuracy of the textbooks and teaching guides.

While not exhaustive, the attached table of seven questionable requested changes provides a strong case against any rushed adoption of factually-challenged, biased and exclusionary ICS recommendations. (Please see the table "Examples of Questionable ICS Edits in Virginia Textbooks." The table was prepared by the Virginia Coalition for Human Rights).

We, the undersigned, strongly urge you not to incorporate any of these ICS changes until a diverse panel of qualified and nonpartisan academic experts is consulted for feedback. With the beginning of the school year 2018-2019 only three months away, we respectfully request your response to this letter by June 30, 2018. Specifically, please let us know how your company will respond to the serious concerns listed above, and please identify a point of contact within your company with whom we can coordinate directly regarding these concerns. The VCHR point of contact for this issue is Jeanne Trabulsi at [jgracet@msn.com](mailto:jgracet@msn.com), telephone # 540-622-6278.

We thank you in advance for your commitment to providing accurate textbooks to Commonwealth of Virginia students and teachers.

Sincerely,

*Paul Noursi and Nancy Wein, Co-chairs  
Virginia Coalition for Human Rights*

**Academic Signatories:**

*Saleem Ahmed M.B.B.Ch., F.C.P.S.  
Assistant Professor & Founding Director of Anatomical Sciences (Ret.)  
Department of Basic Medical Sciences  
Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine  
Roanoke, Virginia*

*Sheila Carapico  
Professor, Political Science and International Studies  
University of Richmond  
Richmond, Virginia*

*Noura Erakat  
Assistant Professor of Legal Studies, Social Justice, and International Area  
Studies  
School of Integrative Studies  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia*

*Michael Fischbach  
Professor of History  
Randolph Macon College  
Ashland, Virginia*

*Bassam Haddad  
Director, Middle East and Islamic Studies Program  
Associate Professor, Schar School of Policy and Government  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia*

*Sumaiya Hamdani  
Associate Professor of Middle East and World History  
History and Art History Department  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia*

*Peter Mandaville  
Professor of International Affairs  
Schar School of Policy and Government  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia*

*Jeremy D. Mayer  
Associate Professor  
Schar School of Policy and Government  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia*

*Frank E. Munley  
Professor Emeritus  
Roanoke College  
Roanoke, Virginia*

*William B. Quandt  
Professor Emeritus  
Department of Politics  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, Virginia*

*Abdulaziz Sachedina, Ph.D.  
Professor and Endowed IIIT Chair in Islamic Studies  
Department of Religious Studies  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia*

*Stephen Sheehi  
Sultan Qaboos bin Said Chair of Middle East Studies  
Professor, Arabic Studies  
Director, Asian and Middle East Studies Program  
Dept of Modern Languages and Literature  
College of William and Mary  
Williamsburg, Virginia*

*Faedah M. Totah, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
School of World Studies  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Richmond, Virginia*

*Lawrence Wilkerson  
Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Government and Public Policy  
College of William and Mary  
Williamsburg, VA*

**VCHR Organizational Signatories:**

*Dr. Osama Abuirshaid, National Policy Director  
American Muslims for Palestine (AMP)*

*Linda Cataldo Modica, Co-chair  
Appalachian Peace Education Center (APEC)*

*Adeeb Abed, President  
Arab American Association of Central Virginia (AAACV)*

*Phil Wilayto, Co-Founder  
Defenders for Freedom, Justice, and Equality (DFJE)*

*Paul H. Verduin, Chair  
Israel-Palestine Mission Network of the National Capital Presbytery (IPMN)*

*Benjamin Douglas, Legislative Chair  
Jewish Voice for Peace-DC Metro (JVP-DC)*

*Ghassan Tarazi & Leslie Withers, Co-Chairs  
Justice in Palestine & Israel Community of the Alliance of Baptists*

*Fred Shwaery, Vice President  
New Dominion PAC (NDPAC)*

*Dr. Ayman Eldarwish, Moderator  
Northern Virginians for Peace & Justice (NVPJ)*

*Zeina Azzam and Ghassan Tarazi, Co-Chairs  
Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace (PCAP)*

*Gary Sandman, Director  
Plowshare Peace & Justice Center*

*Nancy Wein, Chair  
Richmonders for Peace in Israel and Palestine (RPIP)*

*Allan Kellum, Convener  
Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East, Northern Virginia  
Chapter (NOVA-UUJME)*

*Andrea Whitmore and Rev. John Wagner, Co-Chairs  
Steering Committee of United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR)*

*Josh Ruebner, Policy Director  
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (US CPR)*

*Philip Farah, Co-Chair  
Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace (WIAMEP)*