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**American Sociological Association Statement on
the Importance of Teaching and Learning About Race and Racism**

The American Sociological Association (ASA) strongly supports scholars, teachers, and researchers who are committed to raising awareness about the impact of race and racism in American and global society. Unfortunately, many sociologists and sociology teachers are currently facing fear for their livelihoods and careers due to the suppression of discussions of race and structural racism. As a result, some educators are canceling their classes, such as a recent instance where [the faculty of a sociology department at the University of Central Florida](#) removed all courses related to race. The ASA firmly opposes any efforts to prevent educators from teaching and sharing sociological knowledge.

As experts in the study of social life, change, and the causes and consequences of human behavior, sociologists recognize that race is a socially constructed concept, not a biological or natural one. We understand race as a dynamic classification system that has been used to create hierarchies and determine access and opportunities for different people based on factors such as color, culture, heritage, and location. Racism—marked by power, domination, and violence—has been pervasive in societies throughout history. Even though formal forms of racism have been outlawed through constitutional amendments and civil rights laws, their impact is still present in economic and political institutions, leading to persistent disparities among racial groups in areas such as criminal justice, education, health, housing, and income.

Race continues to play an important role in separating communities, as evidenced by numerous studies. Therefore, examining racial groupings and their relationship to various forms of racism is crucial for improving policies and practices to prevent discrimination and human rights violations in communities, government, schools, and workplaces. A functioning democracy also requires that people be able to assess information and participate in civic engagement with a full understanding of historical and current racial inequalities. The prohibition of discussions of race and racism, and related inequalities, disadvantages, and advantages, threatens our democracy more than any education that exposes the causes and practices of building a more just society.

The ASA urges public officials, educators, and lawmakers to avoid suppressing knowledge, violating academic and free speech, and prohibiting scholars and teachers from discussing and teaching about the roles of race and racism in society.