



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

September 30, 2026

A National Call to Action in Observance of the 10th U.S. National Day for the Victims of Communism

Subject: Strengthening Education on the History and Dangers of Communism and Socialism

Dear Colleague:

On November 7, 2026, our nation will observe the 10th U.S. National Day for the Victims of Communism. First established by President Donald J. Trump in 2017 to mark the centennial commemoration of the devastating impact of the Bolshevik Revolution, the day was subsequently augmented in 2025 when the President proclaimed November 2–8 as Anti-Communism Week, honoring the 100+ million victims of communist and socialist regimes.

Socialism is the precursor and economic means to instituting communism through the progressive abolition of private property and businesses, which transfers ownership and economic activity to government control. Every form of socialism, including Democratic Socialism, is completely and fundamentally incompatible with Western systems of social, economic, and political liberty—most significantly, the American constitutional system, which protects individual citizens' rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness. The growing prominence of Marxist-inspired ideology among political movements in the United States is a warning to all friends of freedom and human progress.

President Trump has rightly denounced all ideologies that strip individual rights, eliminate property rights, erase religious liberty, destroy general prosperity, undermine family values, degrade national feeling and patriotism, and suppress overall freedom. He called on Americans to defend liberty, human dignity, and the principles of a free society and ensure that any movements or ideals derived from Marxist ideology find their proper place on the ash heap of history. The negative impact of socialism is not theoretical but represents real harm that can still be seen today played out around the world in failed socialist regimes.

The Department of Education is shedding light on the devastating effects of socialism experienced by individuals who continue to suffer under its regimes. Students should be able to compare the true history of socialism's violent ideology, pervasive atrocities, and spectacular failures with the contrasting success of the constitutional republic designed by America's founders.

Without that historical context, a student's civic education is incomplete. Students who understand the history of socialism and communism know that collectivization, centralized economic planning, political coercion, and suppression of dissent lead to untold human suffering. Murder on an industrial scale including the Ukrainian Holodomor, China's Great Leap Forward, Cambodia's Killing Fields, and the Soviet gulags grew out of socialism's false promises. If we fail to teach our students about historical—and ongoing—oppression and violence under the world's communist and socialist regimes, we are leaving them vulnerable to the same failed ideas repackaged for the digital age by slick demagogues, slogans, and social media influencers.

We therefore recognize and applaud the growing number of states that have enacted laws or programs requiring age-appropriate instruction on the history and dangers of communism, as well as longstanding statutes prohibiting the advocacy of communism and Marxist ideology in the classroom:

- **Arkansas**, which mandates instruction on the dangers of communism, past and present;
- **Arizona**, which requires comparative instruction on the dangers of communism and totalitarianism with America's founding principles of freedom and liberty;
- **California** (Education Code § 51530), **New Hampshire** (RSA 191:1), and **Nevada** (NRS 391.750) prohibit public school teachers from advocating or teaching communism or Marxist ideology in a positive light with the intent to indoctrinate students;
- **Florida**, which requires age- and developmentally appropriate instruction on the history of communism (SB 1264) implemented through adopted standards and benchmarks for grades 6-12, plus dedicated annual Victims of Communism Day instruction in observance of November 7;
- **Tennessee**, which requires Victims of Communism Day instruction on the perils of communism in its social studies standards; and
- **Texas**, which incorporates the dangers of communist regimes, tactics, and atrocities, along with stories of survivor accounts, into its social studies standards;

These states, along with others introducing similar legislation, including **Oklahoma** (House Bill 1094) and **Nebraska** (Legislative Bill 1024), deserve recognition for ensuring that history is taught in its full context.

Additional states have recognized Victims of Communism Day through proclamations or resolutions, such as Alabama, Utah, and Virginia. Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina have introduced or are moving to pass resolutions to recognize November 7.

At this critical cultural crossroads, America's educators play a vital role in confronting the rising popularity of Marxist ideology and exposing its destructive consequences. Only by understanding the devastating human cost of communism and socialism and how these ideologies led to more than 100 million deaths in the 20th century alone can students fully understand the purpose and principles underlying the founding of our country. The United States of America—built on liberty, limited government, free enterprise, and constitutional protections with checks and balances—has produced a nation whose unprecedented economic prosperity, technological innovation, and global influence has transformed the modern world on a scale unparalleled in human history. Students should learn not only what those principles are, but why they were established, what historical circumstances gave rise to them, and why they are essential to preserving freedom in the greatest nation in history.

As we approach the U.S. National Day for the Victims of Communism, let us recommit to preparing young Americans to recognize the critical and inseparable lessons of the causes and consequences of tyranny and freedom. The historical evidence is unambiguous, the responsibility is urgent, and the stakes for the next generation could not be higher.

Thank you for your partnership in this timely and vital work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Linda E. McMahon", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Linda E. McMahon