

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. RES. 1513

Affirming the term “woke” and its historical connection to Black history,  
Black liberation movements, and social justice.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

Ms. LEE of California submitted the following resolution; which was referred  
to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability

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## RESOLUTION

Affirming the term “woke” and its historical connection to  
Black history, Black liberation movements, and social justice.

Whereas Black history is a critical aspect of United States  
history and has shaped United States culture, including  
the evolution of language;

Whereas the words “wake up” and “woke” have served as a  
call to action as conveyed by social activist Marcus Gar-  
vey who stated, “Wake up Ethiopia! Wake up Africa”,  
and the Negro Mine Workers who in 1940 issued the  
statement, “We were asleep. But we will stay woke from  
now on”, in advocating against discriminatory pay;

Whereas the term “woke” was first highlighted in the 1962  
essay, “If You’re Woke, You Dig It”, featured in the  
New York Times by Harlem-based writer William Melvin  
Kelley, who documented the cultural appropriation and

distortion of language, resulting in certain idioms being abandoned by their original Black creators;

Whereas the term “woke” has been similarly misused, as traditional media have reframed “woke” as trendy new slang, eroding its cultural connection and separating the term from its historical grounding in social justice;

Whereas, six decades later, right-wing extremists have engaged in a similar exercise of cultural appropriation to weaponize and misdefine the term “woke”, as evidenced by the “Stop W.O.K.E. Act”, specifically targeting the teaching of United States history and Black educators; and

Whereas Black educators are more likely to teach subjects that incorporate an inclusive view of history, and legislation like the End Woke Higher Education Act threaten to undermine both diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and nondiscrimination protections: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) affirms the term “woke” and its historical  
3       connection to Black history, Black liberation move-  
4       ments, and social justice;

5               (2) encourages a historically accurate and cor-  
6       rect use of the term “woke” when its misuse is iden-  
7       tified; and

8               (3) condemns cultural appropriation, misuse of  
9       Black idioms, and specific efforts to revise history  
10       and to distort and redefine the specific term “woke”.

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