

**From:** [Arellano, Joey](#)  
**To:** [FLHouseDems](#)  
**Subject:** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Florida Legislative Black Caucus Responds to Governor DeSantis' Challenge to Debate Vice President Kamala Harris  
**Date:** Thursday, August 3, 2023 4:33:38 PM

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Aug. 3, 2023

**CONTACT**

Malik Moore  
Office of Representative Hart  
(813) 224-1956  
[Malik.moore@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:Malik.moore@myfloridahouse.gov)

**The Florida Legislative Black Caucus Responds to Governor DeSantis' Challenge to Debate Vice President Kamala Harris**

**TAMPA, Fla.** – Recently **Governor Ron DeSantis** challenged **Vice President Kamala Harris** to a debate on the newly implemented African American history standards. **Vice President Harris** has rightfully declined to engage in an unproductive debate on what should be known facts. However, since the formulation and implementation of these new standards, no conversation was had with any members of the **Florida Legislative Black Caucus**. Members of the Caucus have since issued the following responses.

**Chair Representative Dianne Hart** said, “Governor DeSantis has challenged Vice President Kamala Harris to debate the new African American history standards because he believes it will score him points for his ever-failing Presidential bid. It is obvious that he is not serious about defending or explaining the lies of these standards because not once has he or his office reached out to the members of the FLBC to discuss this curriculum. Not during the formulation nor prior to the implementation. If he is serious about having an actual conversation and hearing why slavery provided no benefit to enslaved people we welcome the opportunity.”

**Senator Shevrin Jones (SD-34)** said, “Clearly, Gov. DeSantis is drinking his own Kool-Aid if he continues to claim that enslaved people benefited from slavery and that Florida is number one in the country for education. The ongoing, blatant propaganda from the Governor’s office is insulting to the millions who call Florida home. Try as he might, revisionist history and present won’t resuscitate his flailing presidential campaign.”

**Historian Senator Geraldine Thompson (SD- 15)** said, “I am a long-standing member of the African American History Task Force and was not informed of the formation of a work group to develop standards on instruction on African American history. Neither was I invited to join the work group. Clearly the Governor and the Commissioner of Education didn’t want or seek a broad perspective on the standards.”

**Secretary Senator Tracie Davis (SD- 5)** said, “This governor has proven, without fail, that he has no interest in protecting Black history, no interest in helping Floridians, and absolutely no interest in anything beyond his ridiculous presidential ambitions. Vice President Harris had every right to deny his farce of a debate. Florida’s Commissioner of Education already has a Task Force of African American History experts who were not consulted – instead the job was given to a group of empty yes men and a conservative think tank. If we’re looking for ‘indoctrination of students,’ maybe the governor should look in a mirror.”

###