

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## MASSACHUSETTS BLACK AND LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

ROOM 460, STATE HOUSE

BOSTON, MA 02133-1054

TELEPHONE: (617) 722-2688

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**Contact:** Lucas DeBarros 617-722-2688

### **Black & Latino Caucus Calls for Cultural Diversity in Oversight Following Concerns Raised by Distressed Students Regarding MCAS Question**

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recently pulled a question from the State’s MCAS exam and noted that the question will not be graded on previously submitted tests. The decision was made after several students were distressed at the sight of a prompt requiring that they answer emulating an “openly racist” book character.

These types of mishaps occur in the absence of diverse oversight, and the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus is stressing the importance of diversity in the groups making these types of decisions across the Commonwealth. The prompt was reportedly vetted and approved by DESE’s bias committee.

“Maintaining a high level of expectation on education matters in Massachusetts must extend to the content review process for all tests to ensure racial sensitivity and appropriateness” stated Caucus Chairman **Representative Carlos González** (D – Springfield). He continued, “We would like to know who has oversight to sign off on these matters, who sits on DESE’s bias committee, and how those individuals are appointed in order to work with DESE to help avoid these situations in the future.”

Cultural sensitivity and competency has remained a top issue for the Caucus as it addresses public safety, education, and various other policy matters. Stressing cultural competency in decision making processes helps ensure that Black and Latinx populations receive equitable benefits as new policies are developed; and more importantly, it helps assure that they are not negatively impacted following decisions such as this.

*The Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus is a group of state legislators seeking to define, highlight and analyze those issues and concerns affecting people of color in the Commonwealth. For more information, please visit: [www.mablacklatinocaucus.com](http://www.mablacklatinocaucus.com)*

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