

Dr. Smith,

Thank you for sharing your perspective. I'd like to offer mine—shaped by studying this field since 1991 and by tracing and documenting my lineage to chattel slavery back to the 1780s. No one Black person—**particularly in a non-colonized state**—owns the narrative of suffering or holds exclusive moral authority on the question of harm. As descendants of slavery, we all carry elements of that trauma. Some of the deepest scars are internal, rooted in what Carter G. Woodson called “the colonized mind.” As he wrote in *The Mis-Education of the Negro*:

I have served as a scorer for many RFPs across multiple agencies. There is no monolithic process—sometimes scorers confer; often we do not. The directive here was clear: score the proposals on their merits, budget, capacity, qualifications, and methodological rigor—not on popularity, personality, or community pressure. Academic research demands academic standards. To avoid skewed findings, you need evaluators who are trained, objective, and allowing the research—not their preconceived beliefs—to determine the KPIs and outcomes. That was our charge, and we honored it.

The current upheaval is not about justice; it is the result of individuals abandoning ethics for outrage. Nothing in the RCW, Commerce guidance, or AAG instructions allows scorers to substitute public pressure for process. *Integrity cannot be retrofitted after the fact.*

**You call for a pause. Respectfully, I do not.
Black people have been “paused” since 1619.
What this moment requires is courage.**

We are facing a \$15B budget deficit. As someone who moves billions of dollars in policy and budget negotiations every year, I can assure you: it will not become easier to secure reparations funding if a valid study concludes it is warranted. Delaying this process only weakens the momentum, the legal foundation, and the fiscal window we have right now.

I honor your service, your history, and your commitment to justice. But justice is not achieved by halting a lawful process to appease a loud minority. Justice is achieved by truth, by rigor, and by the steadfast discipline to complete the work with integrity.

Thank you for listening—and for engaging in this moment with seriousness and conviction.

In closing, perhaps I did not get the memo of fear, because I was raised by a preacher from Georgia (Rev. Gillis). We walk by faith not by sight in order to please God. I'm not afraid of dissent.

In service to the community,

Paula F. Sardinas, NBPLA (she/her/ella)

Linda Smith

Tue, Dec 2, 2025 at 7:08 AM

Thank you for your perspective and I am walking by faith. My Pause is simply for us to discuss so that, let me say that I understand. I cannot speak for everyone because everyone has different a perspective.

Thank you,

Dr. Linda

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

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Paula Sardinas

Tue, Dec 2, 2025 at 7:40 AM

Dr. Smith,

I understand, and you have my full support. I never question your heart. My concern is simply that we cannot afford to pause this important work. We have already heard from community, and once we have completed our responsibilities with integrity, we must be willing to stand on that integrity. Yielding to community pressure sets a dangerous precedent for bullying. Community should be taught how to engage properly with the legislative process and with state agencies. What we are witnessing now is not that.

We honor the protest period because we honor community voices, and everyone deserves to be heard. But we also have a responsibility to honor the hard work of the people who applied in good faith. Integrity requires that we do what is right by everyone involved.

Right now, an organization is being publicly shamed for winning a meritorious bid. None of us should condone this behavior. It could just as easily happen to any of us. And if it did, how would we feel?

Respectfully,

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Prince, Ed (CAAA)

Tue, Dec 2, 2025 at 1:29 PM

Good afternoon,

We can have this discussion in more detail on the 10th. I appreciate all the input. In general, we need to remember that we followed the process, and we have to act like it. When we over explain it makes it look like we did something

Edward O. Prince

Executive Director

WA State Commission on African American Affairs

Mission: To improve the well-being of African Americans by increasing their access to participation in the fields of government, business, education, health care, and other areas.

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