

Sociological and Philosophical Associations Send Letter to Brazil on Efforts to Defund University
Departments

May 3, 2019

In a tweet on Friday, April 27, Brazil's president, Jair Bolsonaro, said that the Minister of Education is considering withdrawing funds from philosophy and sociology programs.

In response, the American Sociological Association and the American Philosophical Association sent a community letter to President Bolsonaro and Education Minister Weintraub regarding the proposed defunding of sociology and philosophy in Brazilian universities. The letter follows:

Dear President Bolsonaro and Minister Weintraub,

We write on behalf of professional societies of sociologists and philosophers representing tens of thousands of people around the world to strongly protest your efforts to defund university departments of sociology and philosophy.

We certainly understand the importance of ensuring that college graduates are well-equipped to enter the workforce. What we write to convey is that a strong liberal arts education, including humanistic and social scientific study, indeed provides a very strong basis for both professional and civic endeavors. Graduates with degrees in disciplines like sociology and philosophy are trained to think critically, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively in teams, for example. These skills are fundamental in all workplaces, and this intellectual orientation provides practical expertise that can be deployed in all sectors to strengthen Brazil's economy.

This effort to defund academic departments interferes with the academic independence and freedom of inquiry that are so crucial to the productivity of a nation's higher education system and will tarnish Brazil's standing for research and scholarship. We respectfully urge you to ensure that Brazilian students and scholars are able to pursue their teaching, research, and studies fully protected from governmental influence, and that both sociology and philosophy remain respected and supported fields of study.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Philosophical Association
American Sociological Association
American Anthropological Association*
American Comparative Literature Association*
American Historical Association*
Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação em Filosofia
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Australasian Association of Philosophy

British Philosophical Association
Canadian Philosophical Association
International Sociological Association
Sociedade Brasileira de Sociologia
Society of Architectural Historians*
Society of Biblical Literature*

Asterisk (*) denotes organizations that signed the letter after May 3, 2019.