

Ohio State School Board Testimony Opposition to the July 2020 Resolution to Condemn Racism

Good afternoon. My name is Mr. Mark Raczynski, and I am currently an Ohio public school social studies teacher of 24 years. Prior to my teaching career I served honorably as a combat infantry marine in Desert Shield/Storm. I took an oath of enlistment at age 17 in 1989 and swore to support and defend the Constitution. I have been a public servant to our American government my whole teenage and adult life. I speak to you today as a concerned American citizen and father of 3 high school students.

I have read the July 2020 school board's RESOLUTION TO CONDEMN RACISM AND TO ADVANCE EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR BLACK STUDENTS, INDIGENOUS STUDENTS AND STUDENTS OF COLOR. I agree racism should be condemned, but I am also concerned that some members on the board have failed to see the many dangers of Critical Race Theory (CRT). I presume the board is familiar with CRT and how these theories relate to the above mentioned resolution. Today, I propose two unique points that I feel are often unmentioned in the CRT argument. I graciously ask you to consider them despite your predilections. 1. Critical Race Theory advocates do not think deeply enough about the age old definition of sin and how it relates to individual accountability and responsibility for all human beings. 2. Critical Race Theory is a divisive concept that detours precious time and resources away from positive and practical help to our Ohio students.

Critical Race Theory goes beyond the definition of racism and proposes that individuals are complicit in racism by virtue of their own ethnicity (Davis, 2020 February). Ancient historical texts argue against a person being judged for the sins of others. The Jewish prophet Ezekiel said "The person who sins will die. A son will not suffer the punishment for the father's guilt, nor will a father suffer the punishment for the son's guilt; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself" (Ezekiel 18:20, New American Standard Bible 1995). The Christian Apostle, Paul of Tarsus also stated: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a person sows, this he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7, New American Standard Bible 1995). These texts might sound obsolete in a relativistic society, but the truth of individual responsibility and accountability is not new in history or in our current American legal system. Teaching students to be individually responsible for their actions should be a primary goal of society.

Critical Race Theory creates and supports a system of perpetual victimhood for those who identify themselves as oppressed. This is victim mentality. CRT fuels the belief that most people are worse than you and that problems in society are someone else's fault, not yours. Worse, CRT promotes individual self-righteousness and divisiveness toward other humans (Davis, 2020, June). The problem of racism is not extinguished but perpetuated. The CRT mentality creates a never-ending cycle of hopelessness and despair for not only the individual but for their future descendants. CRT offers power rebalancing in society not repentance, forgiveness, faith, hope, and love. I personally benefited from the above mentioned virtues as I myself was born in a fatherless home to an uneducated single mother on welfare.

My second and final point today is that Critical Race Theory is a divisive concept that detours precious time and resources away from positive and practical help to our Ohio students. The July 2020 Resolution to Condemn Racism says "The path to equity begins with a deep understanding of the history of inequalities." (Resolution Item 20, 2020). Where does the board or ODE expect to find racism, bigotry, and hatred in our K-12 curriculum? Countless state standards, in a variety of disciplines, at a variety of grade levels, already address discrimination and injustice. However, CRT believes racism is present in every aspect of life, every relationship, and every interaction. CRT will find hidden racism in your workplace, your school, your society, your neighborhood, your books, your food, your music, your hobbies, your faith, your church, your community, your friends, your relationships, and yourself (Lindsay, 2020). This exhaustive, timely, and expensive approach as seen in the board's July 2020 proposal detracts time away from such practical goals of increasing our math and literacy rates in Ohio.

"A homeowner who wants to remove weeds from his front yard could pour weed killer on his grass. But there is a better way. The best and most effective way to get rid of weeds is to grow and nurture very healthy grass. If the grass is healthy and strong, the weeds will not take root" (Markos, 2020). There are better ways to combat racism other than through contentious theories like CRT. Let us as leaders encourage all Ohio students to pursue individual accountability and not victim mentality. Let us instruct all students on how to utilize the blessings of a capitalist, free Republic for their own good of society. Let us infuse positive virtues such as patriotism, integrity, enthusiasm, honesty, judgement, self-control, and empathy into the curriculum as we make a mindful effort to celebrate the unbeatable spirit of America. Thank you for your consideration and attention.

Resources

- Davis, E. (2020, February 20). Overview of Critical Race Theory & Intersectionality. Retrieved November 04, 2020, from <https://thecriplegate.com/overview-evaluation-of-critical-race-theory-intersectionality/>
- Davis, E. (2020, June 05). America's Newest Religion. Retrieved November 04, 2020, from <https://thecriplegate.com/americas-newest-religion/>
- Lindsay, J., (2020, June 12). Eight Big Reasons Critical Race Theory Is Terrible for Dealing with Racism. Retrieved November 04, 2020, from <https://newdiscourses.com/2020/06/reasons-critical-race-theory-terrible-dealing-racism/>
- Markos, L. (2020, October 29). How To Stop Schools From Replacing True Virtue With Virtue Signaling. Retrieved November 04, 2020, from <https://thefederalist.com/2020/10/27/how-to-stop-schools-from-replacing-true-virtue-with-leftist-virtue-signaling/>
- Resolution Item 20 (2020, July 14). Retrieved November 04, 2020, from <http://education.ohio.gov/>