

# WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying

Date: September 20, 2021

Name: Kenneth Stone

Are you representing: I'm representing myself.

Position/Title: Quality Control

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Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes. Email: kobron23@gmail.com

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB322 and HB327

Specific Issue: Ohio's "Anti-CRT" bills

Are you testifying as a: I'm an opponent of the bills

**Please provide a brief statement on your position:**

During my elementary school years, I started out in a predominantly Black school, and was bused to an overwhelming White school in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

While I didn't experience much overt, in-your-face racism in the school, my friends who were bused with me, consistently felt like outsiders from the students and the faculty, even though the school was only a few miles from our initial school.

In many of the classes I was the only Black student, and was only sought out when there were stereotypical Black assignments like assuming I'm a good basketball player, or assuming I would be the best to play the street tough guy (nowadays it would be called the "thug") role in a play.

The only Black figures we were taught about were MLK, Rosa Parks and Frederick Douglass, while there was an abundance of White heroes to look up to. Throughout those formative years, I felt prejudged based on my skin color by students and faculty.

How great would it have been for the school system to have offered some diversity/cultural training to help the students and the faculty relate and understand each other better, and better adjust to the transition.

Diversity courses are not meant to separate, but to help each group be better at finding commonality, and appreciating the uniqueness of each party. They are also good at teaching the true history of the country because as we know, if we don't learn our history, we are destined to repeat it. Another great resource of Diversity training is Unconscious Bias, which affects us all. This is one of the most critical and impactful knowledge tools towards improving race and cultural relations.

As I transitioned into an adult and went into the adult world, I made a conscious decision to get to know people of various backgrounds to help expand my horizons, and challenge my perceptions.

In the last couple years, there has been a 276 % increase in the multiracial population, and the White population has decreased for the first time. As the U.S becomes more and more diverse, the more comfortable our young children become with celebrating the differences in others, the easier it will be when they get into the job market and possibly have a boss of a different race.

If you think about how often we see companies spend millions on an ad campaign only to find out that it's deemed insensitive by certain groups. The more exposure the students have to different groups, the more they will be able to head off those issues as adults.

We often hear the phrase about wanting a "seat at the table", well we aren't looking to take the White student's seat, we are just asking for a larger table that all groups can learn and grow from.

2020 and 2021 have been historic years, and when future generations look back at these periods and this topic, let's make sure we are on the right side of history.