
PROPONENT TESTIMONY

DATE: June 22, 2021

TO: Members of the House State and Local Government Committee

FROM:

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee, I appreciate the members of this committee hearing proponent testimony on House Bill 327, legislation declaring that Ohio Prohibit Teaching, Advocating, or Promoting Divisive Concepts.

As a parent, PTO member, and resident of Upper Arlington, I am writing in support of House Bill 327. It is time for the State Legislature to take control of a situation in schools that is getting out of hand. Our children deserve to learn how to be critical thinkers by looking at many sides of an issue. No child should have to listen to an adult tell them that they are different or lesser because of their skin color, their country of origin or for any reason.

Our schools were designed to teach children how to read and write, how to manipulate numbers, and to learn the history of their country and the world. My college-aged children learned about the evils of slavery and the Jim Crow laws. During their lessons, they were not taught that they should be ashamed of their white skin.

In Upper Arlington, they have not said they are teaching Critical Race Theory; but all the underpinnings of CRT are in the new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion push in all areas of the school. The District has hired a Director of DEI. Each school building has a DEI committee. Our Superintendent and Board members have stated that our children “need a lot of work.” I find it offensive the District implies that our children are racists or have white privilege.

The Staff of Upper Arlington has been taking Diversity training for several years. The terms “implicit bias” and “micro-aggressions” are used by the teachers and Administrators. It infuriates me that we are teaching our children that they are never allowed to be insulted or have their feelings hurt. The Constitution says nothing about being offended. By learning at school that someone should be punished for offending, our children are not taught tolerance or the meaning of free speech. One UA high school group has suggested the school create “Re-education classes” for students who offend them. This statement reflects the poor quality of teaching in our District. As a parent, I expect that high school students should know what real “Re-education camps” were.

In one of Upper Arlington’s elementary schools, the Counselor is creating “Social Justice Advocates” in grades 2-5. What does that mean? What indoctrination are the children receiving? In addition, the Counselor described her main goal for the coming year is “Restorative Justice.” I would propose that a Counselor should spend the next year helping students deal with the stress of returning to normal school after the pandemic.

Upper Arlington created a new Strategic Plan in 2019. It is full of the hallmarks of the Critical Race Theory terminology. It does not mention the strength of Academics. It focuses on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. In addition, the School Board passed a Resolution that stated they would end racism. That is a noble goal, but I wonder how our school district has such power to end something that has been in existence since humans started walking the earth. The arrogance of all of this is breathtaking.

The Ohio Department of Education is using the Critical Race Theory terminology as well. In their Resolution to Condemn Racism, they state: “*Whereas, Equity is our plan’s greatest imperative and number one principle;*” Our children need to be taught **EQUALITY**. That is the founding principle of this nation. Our children are being taught that the United States is a horrible country. They are not learning the history of how people fix the problems and move forward. There is much to be done to solve the issues of racism, poverty and prejudice. However, our teachers and school Administrators should not be allowed to indoctrinate our children with the belief that they are judged by the color of their skin.

I have watched many School Board meetings in Ohio and throughout the country where parents are pushing back against this ideology. I read a heart-breaking letter from a high school student in New Jersey where he thanked his teacher for stepping up and calling out her District. As a white male, he said he went home every day feeling awful. He was told he was a misogynist and a racist. We cannot allow that to happen in Ohio schools.

Do your jobs as legislators and protect all of our children. This topic is too important to leave up to each individual District. Families cannot fight School Boards as we have learned in Upper Arlington. There is no mechanism in Ohio to remove a Board member. It is the Board who hires the Superintendent, so families have no power. Too much of this indoctrination is taking place under the cloak of darkness. It is woven into lessons by teachers with an agenda. You have the power to end this.

In conclusion, I urge you to pass HB 327 to protect children from the indoctrination of harmful ideology in our schools.

Sincerely,

Cathy Pultz

Upper Arlington Ohio