

Chairman Wiggam, Vice-Chairwoman John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the State & Local Government Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony on HB 322 today.

My name is John Michael LaRue, and I am the pastor of First Baptist Church Miamisburg. I am also the chairman of the Christian Life and Resolutions Committee of the Greater Dayton Association of Baptists. I have worked extensively on the issues of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality for our local, state, and national associations.

Today, I want to serve you the best I can by providing clear, concise definitions to terminology in this discussion. It is the unfortunate reality that these terms are widely recognized and used, but often poorly defined. Upon their definition, I believe you will be better equipped to understand why this bill ought to be passed and our schools ought not be teaching this ideological perspective which is harmful to our students and ultimately harmful to our state.

*Critical Theory* began in the 1920's and was a designation for several generations of German philosophers and social theorists in the Western European Marxist tradition. A theory was deemed critical (as opposed to traditional) when it sought to emancipate humans from slavery, act as a liberating influence, and create a world satisfying the needs and powers of humans. The Marxist element as it relates to the culture proposed that there is a class division in all societies between those in power and those without power.

*Cultural Marxism* theorizes that those in power always oppress those not in power, hence creating two distinct classes: the oppressed and the oppressors. Narrowly, various critical theories have been advanced seeking to flesh out the power struggles between the oppressed and the oppressor class including feminist critical theory, postmodern critical theory, queer critical theory, and critical race theory.

*Critical Race Theory* (CRT) began as a theoretical, philosophical movement within American law schools in the late 1970's and mid 1980's as a reworking of critical legal studies on race with emphases on postmodernism, moral relativism, and social constructionism. CRT originally held that the law and legal institutions are inherently and systemically racist and that race itself, instead of being biologically grounded and natural, is a socially constructed concept that is used by the racially defined oppressor class to further their economic and political interests at the expense of the racially defined oppressed class. CRT has further been expanded to infer that all social institutions are inherently and systemically racist and operate to promote the interests of the racially defined oppressor class against the racially defined oppressed class.

*Intersectionality* (I) developed from within CRT and feminist critical theory emphasizing that there are various aspects of a person's identity (race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, disability, etc) that could place them within either an oppressed class or an oppressor class. Intersectionality purports that those who have more overlapping categories fitting in the oppressed class result in a compounding of that individual's oppression.

Intersectionality leads to *Identity Politics*, in which people seek to advance their given groups cause in relation to their lack of public support. The result of Intersectionality is that society is broken into a tiered society in which the groups with the most combined aspects of oppression are placed in the

lowest tier and those with the most combined aspects of power/oppressing in the highest tier. Intersectionality could be diagrammed as a ladder with the rungs from top to bottom being represented by (1) a white, heterosexual male, then (2) a white, heterosexual female, (3) a white, homosexual male, (4) a white, homosexual female, (5) a black, heterosexual male, (6) a black, heterosexual female, (7) a black, homosexual male, (8) a black, homosexual female, (9) a white, transgender male/female, and (10) a black, transgender male/female.

*Racism* has thus been \*redefined\* according to the power dynamics of those on the ladder, and thus only those in an oppressor class can act racist against those in a lower oppressed class. Those in a lower oppressed class cannot act racist against those in an oppressor class above them according to Critical Race Theory proponents.

*Social justice* (SJ) describes what occurs when an oppressed identity group is given more agency than they previously had. The moral responsibility of those with more combined aspects of power (those higher on the ladder) is to divest themselves of their power and elevate the cultural voice of those lower than themselves. This is what it means to be *Woke*, in that those in positions of power are awakened to their oppression of others and are called to renounce racism by seeking to lift up those who have been oppressed by their participation in the system that is inherently racist.

I fully support HB 322 seeking to ban the teaching of Critical Race Theory as it redefines racism in an incredibly detrimental way to our society and does not produce the results of a flourishing, healthy society in which every single one of its citizens is recognized as having inherent worth and dignity not on the basis of the ethnicity or biological sex, but on the basis of being endowed such unalienable dignity and rights by their Creator.

Chairman Wiggam, Vice-Chairwoman John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the State & Local Government Committee, thank you for allowing me to present this vital bill to you and I look forward to your support and questions.