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## PROPONENT TESTIMONY

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DATE: June 23, 2021

TO: Members of the House State and Local Government Committee

FROM: Anne Douglas of Rocky River Citizens for Transparency

RE: Support for H.B. 327: Prohibit Teaching, Advocating, or Promoting Divisive Concepts

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.

Enter testimony here and sign and date.

I am Anne Douglas, speaking on behalf of Rocky River Citizens for Transparency. I have had 5 children in the Rocky River City Schools. For the past seven years the district has contracted with the Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio (DCNEO) for diversity training. Our superintendent, Micheal Shoaf, serves on the DCNEO Board, and is the primary decision-maker in contracting with the DCNEO. We have asked him to step down from the DCNEO board because of this conflict of interest but he refuses. Our district and the DCNEO have both claimed that they are not teaching Critical Race Theory. However, our contract with the DCNEO includes a clause that the materials are proprietary and cannot be reproduced without permission. School Board members requested to see the curriculum, but On May 18 the DCNEO refused, stating in an email that the content is “propriety and cannot be shared.”

Ohio revised code 3313.60 entitles me to a prompt inspection of my children’s curriculum. On June 3rd I submitted a request to inspect the diversity curriculum taught to my children. On June 14<sup>th</sup>, After eleven days the school district responded that I could see the curriculum on July 27<sup>th</sup> in another **month and a half!** My right is to a PROMPT inspection! I immediately met with the school board president and informed them that they were in violation of the law, and demanded to see the curriculum in 24 hours or answer to my attorney. Miraculously, I was now able view the curriculum within a couple days. Last week, on June 18<sup>th</sup>, fifteen days after my curriculum request, my husband and inspected the diversity training slides and handouts. Some of it was acceptable, but much of it contained the tenets of CRT. And things were clearly being hidden from us. I will give you some examples.

Students were asked to draw a pie chart with slices for the various group identities that they belong to, such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, sexual orientation, nationality and age. They were asked which group identity they most strongly identified with, then separated into groups based on these groups for discussion. Group identity is at the core of CRT.

Seventh grade students were taught the “cycle of oppression” which circles through stereotype, to prejudice and discrimination. The slides did not come out and say that whites are racist, but I know for a fact my children have been taught this in diversity classes in the past. The strong language of dominant and subordinate, oppressor and oppressed, which I know has been used in these classes was absent from the slides that were shown to me. But then, I was not given the instructor's speaking notes.

Every lesson began with a stand up/ sit down icebreaker activity that included instructor statements that were never shown to me. There also was a section listed for implicit bias, but no content on this topic was included, as if it had been deleted from the material shown to me. It made me wonder if the 15 day delay had been used to “clean up” the presented curriculum.

Until I was able to view the curriculum last week, the administration and School Board had never seen the curriculum that had been taught for the last eight years—and-which this last year was contracted for \$72,000 of taxpayer money. They have been claiming not to teach CRT without ever vetting the curriculum.

The administration cites the Ohio social emotional learning standards as if they are required, but in fact, they are entirely optional. There is no mandate to teach diversity. We are hopeful that since this evidence has come to light, our district will sever ties with the DCNEO and stop teaching these divisive concepts. Those in our community who favor Critical Race Theory will likely pressure our school to fill this vacuum with a new curriculum that could be just as bad. This is why we need House Bill 327 to protect Ohio children from divisive concepts being taught in school. Thank you.