



RACHEL R. CITAK,
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June 21, 2021

To: Chair Scott Wiggam
Vice Chair Marilyn S. John
Ranking Member Brigid Kelly
Members of the House State and Local Government Committee

From: Rachel R. Citak, Attorney at Law LLC

Re: Proponent, HB 327, Prohibit teaching, advocating, or promoting divisive concepts

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and Members of the House State and Local Government Committee:

My name is Rachel Citak and I am owner and operator of my own black-owned, woman-run law firm based out of Cincinnati. My husband and I are attorneys servicing clients across Ohio and Kentucky on a variety of legal issues including custody, advocacy, and nonprofit law. My law firm operates on the principles of fairness and equality. We take on many pro-bono cases and issues. We strive to treat each client with respect and kindness.

I am a Cincinnati native. I graduated from the UC College of Law and I completed my undergrad education at Xavier University, where I graduated cum laude with a Psychology Major and English Minor that included in-depth studies on sociology, philosophy, and Black American literature. I attended k-12 classes in the Forest Hills School District. As one of just a handful of black students in my graduating class, I experienced my fair share of hurtful incidents related to race during my k-12 years.

I do not disagree that racism exists in this world and in our state. I disagree that Critical Race Theory (CRT) or, more accurately, Critical Theory, is in any way equipped to solve it.

On the contrary, Critical Theory only serves to perpetuate stereotypes, manufacture identity crises, and increase racial animosity. In essence, Critical Theory increases racism and division instead of solving it.

Critical Theory, a thread of Postmodernism and Relativism, can be summed up as the belief that the problems we face in our world can be traced to the power structures within it. Critical Theory requires us seek out and cast off every power structure in order to be truly free. The problem is—this is a power structure in and of itself—and not a successful one. In the century since its arguable inception, Critical Theory has not solved racism, sexism, or any other -ism. Instead, it capitalizes upon these -isms to successfully divide societies and topple assumed “power structures.” This is Critical Theory working

exactly as intended—to divide and conquer. Critical Theory claims that this “great dismantling” of power structures will lead to greater equity and inclusion for all.

These assumed power structures then become the perpetual “boogeyman.” In other words, CRT makes our societal structure the scapegoat, while failing to deliver on its claimed ideals.

Critical Theory encourages division based in race, sex, and socioeconomic class. But the most important division is that of the “oppressed” and the “oppressor.” You might know it as the “privileged” and the “disadvantaged;” the “offender” and the “victim;” the “majority” and the “minoritized racial group.”

Under Critical Theory, once everyone is stripped of their individual identities and assigned to groups and divided accordingly, these groups can be weaponized against those alleged to be “privileged” or “oppressors.” In this way, Critical Theory punishes present groups for the past. It creates resentment and defensiveness, all while labeling this natural response as “white fragility.”

Critical Race Theory is critically flawed. It does not encourage pride in one’s race nor inspire individualism. It does not support development of character, kindness, or unity, because every action in Critical Theory can be reduced to the alleged power structures in place which elevate the inherently superior and deprecate the inferior.

HB 327 returns power to the parents when it comes to shaping the developing worldview of Ohio’s young minds. Parents deserve the authority to address such sensitive and difficult topics as racism and equality with their children rather than have state funded institutions address such topics in a divisive manner, potentially contrary to that family’s values. HB 327 encourages transparency to hold local governments accountable.

HB 327 does not prohibit schools from teaching about segregation, slavery, or incidents of racism in our Nation’s history. Rather it requires schools to address these topics objectively and without bias, as should be required of a concept like racism that has no clear-cut answer provided by any arena of art or science. Especially not the answers offered by Ibram X. Kendi or Robin DeAngelo.

From a legal perspective, I cannot support these teachings for the next generation. In law school, I was taught that “separate is inherently unequal.” A social theory that encourages unequal treatment for one race is one that works toward the unequal treatment of all races.

True diversity isn’t just reflected in the color of our skin, it also means creating an environment where creativity and diversity of thought can flourish for Ohio’s youth, without any race-based favor or fatalistic preoccupation with one’s ethnicity.

Our schools need diversity, not division.

I urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to vote yes and pass HB 327 to prohibit teaching, advocating, or promoting divisive concepts. Thank you for your time and consideration.