

**Opponent Testimony for House Bill 327
Kate Elliott
State and Local Government Committee
September 21, 2021**

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairwoman John, Ranking Member Representative Kelly, and Members of the State and Local Government Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Kate Elliott. I am a former early childhood educator and a mother of two. I am also white. I strongly oppose House Bill 327.

I have already begun conversations with my children—both under seven years old—about the history of race in our nation. They have many friends who are not white, including their best friends and neighbors. We have done the traditional approach of learning about Rosa Parks and about Martin Luther King, Jr. But we have also had conversations about the fact that our neighbor is followed home by the police more often than Daddy is, and that it is probably due to the color of his skin. We approach the topic as important for them to understand so that they can be a better friend, to look out for instances of unfairness and inequality and to stand up for what is right. I have yet to observe any guilt or shame in my children on account of these conversations, or due to the color of their skin.

I oppose these bills because those who do not learn from history are forced to repeat it. If we cannot look back pragmatically on the way in which our nation was founded and the impact that can have on how our nation functions, we will remain trapped in the opportunity divide that we see today. We claim to be the land of opportunity and the American Dream, yet as of 2019, half of American families could combine all their assets and still only make up 1% of our nation's wealth.¹

The issues of opportunity and achievement are complicated and nuanced. It is our responsibility to effectively educate future generations and arm them to work together in the future to solve problems like climate change, the evolution of warfare, and a fracturing economy. We do not do this by banning a piecemeal list of "Prohibited Concepts." We do this by training teachers to have these difficult conversations in an effective way that won't

create guilt, anxiety or a sense of superiority or inferiority for any child involved in the conversation. We do this by equipping parents with ways to help their children process these topics outside of the classroom. We do this by facing our challenges, not trying to sweep them under a rug with a bill that relies on a bullet-point list of specific grievances instead of trusting schools and educators to approach topics in a way that works for their community.

As a mother and former educator, I ask you to strongly consider my testimony opposing HB 327 and vote NO on this ridiculous bill.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Elliott

¹ <https://www.stlouisfed.org/open-vault/2020/december/has-wealth-inequality-changed-over-time-key-statistics>