

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 6-22-2021

Name: Jacob Cain

Are you representing: **Yourself**

Organization (If Applicable): N/A

Position/Title: College Student

Address: 1220 Orchard Park Dr.

City: Rocky River State: OH Zip: 44116

Best Contact Telephone: (216) 983-9619 Email: jacobacain@gmail.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? **Yes**

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): House Bill 327

Specific Issue: Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Ohio Schools

Are you testifying as a: **Proponent**

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? **No**

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? 4 minutes

Please provide a brief statement on your position: See Attachment.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

PROPONENT TESTIMONY

DATE: 6-22-2021

TO: Members of the House State and Local Government Committee

FROM: Jacob Cain

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.

My name is Jacob Cain and I am a recent graduate of the Rocky River school system. I participated in the Diversity Center program. I still remember the instructor teaching us that “only white people can be racist.” This is not an exaggeration. She said it matter of factly as though it was not up for debate. I remember it, not just because of the confusion it caused amongst my classmates, but because of how backwards and misleading this idea is. To state that only one race is capable of prejudice and mistreatment of other races is both logically indefensible and suspiciously close to racism.

One instructor asked us to describe her, and would not stop calling on people until someone finally stated that she was black. Why did she insist that we use her race to identify her? What happened to people being judged “not for the color of their skin but for the content of their character?” This is labeling people by their race, and it’s counterproductive. We were also taught about inherent bias, the supposed subconscious, unremovable racism present in all white people.

The Diversity Center teachings have a negative impact on all students, but the most harm is done to students of color. Telling a black student that their white peers inherently view them through the lens of negative stereotypes could make them begin to question their friendships. They might wonder if their friends secretly view them as inferior. They might wonder if their friends only spend time with them to prove they are not like the “bad” white people. They could begin to feel alone in a place where they once felt welcome. These thoughts are damaging to a young individual, especially during the turbulent social landscape of high school.

Confirmation bias is the psychological phenomena where once you believe something to be true, you start to see it everywhere. If you are taught to see everything through the lens of race, every mishap, inconvenience, or bad interaction will be interpreted as caused by racism. For example, a student not selected for a team because of a lack of skills may conclude it’s because of their race. This dilutes the ability to respond to instances of real racism. These demoralizing teachings can result in a negative pattern of seeing others as enemies because of their skin color, a trait which should be no more defining than the color of one’s hair or eyes.

Students spend an enormous amount of time worrying about social relationships, trying to avoid criticism and the disapproval of their peers. If a student feels that another student won’t like or trust them, they will be reluctant to interact with them. For many socially anxious students, it simply is not worth it to risk being labeled racist because of a botched interaction with a black classmate. They will choose to avoid the problem by avoiding the interaction altogether. Also, black students probably don’t want their white friends to feel like they have to walk on eggshells around them. The training intended to solve racism, instead drives a wedge between black and white students.

Unproven theories were presented to us as facts. We were told that it was important that we believed these theories, and that we needed to change our thought patterns if we didn’t. These ideas do nothing to better the lives of students of color, and provide no benefit to white students either. We do not need to be “trained” to interact with diverse groups. When left alone, children don’t care about each other’s race. Only by drawing attention to it and instilling a sense of division does real racism spread.

Jacob A. Cain

6-22-2021